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L E T T E R S

TO

DR. NEW COME,

BISHOP OF WATERFORD.

ON THE

DURATION
OF OUR
SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

MULTA RENASCENTUR QUAE JAM CECIDERE; CADENTQUE
QUAE NUNC SUNT IN HONORE—
HORACE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE former of these letters is contained in my *English Harmony of the Evangelists*; but not being large, it is now reprinted, that the whole correspondence might be before the reader in a more convenient form. It was the more expedient to do this, as my correspondent has set me the example of quitting the form of his *Harmony*, in printing his *Letter*, and as it is uncertain how far this amicable controversy may extend. When the whole is completed, these *Letters* may make a volume of themselves.



CONTENTS of the SECOND LETTER.

SECTION I.

OF the testimony of the Christian Fathers 29

SECTION II.

Of the conduct of Luke in giving a date to the preaching of John the Baptist 45

SECTION III.

Of the ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, concerning Jesus, at the time of the death of John the Baptist 48

SECTION IV.

Of the interpolation of the word passover in John vi. 4. 57

SECTION V.

Of the transposition of the 5th and 6th chapters of the gospel of John 70

SECTION VI.

Of journeys supposed to be omitted in my Harmony 75

SECTION VII.

Of the number of miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per day 78

SECTION VIII.

Of references to more than two passovers in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke 82

SECTION

S E C T I O N IX.

Page

Of the argument for the probable duration of our Saviour's ministry from the objects of it — 87

S E C T I O N X.

Of the transactions at the first Passover — 92

S E C T I O N XI.

Of the stay that Jesus made in Judea after the first passover — — — 100

S E C T I O N XII.

Of the journey from Judea to Galilee — 104

S E C T I O N XIII.

Whether Jesus visited Capernaum or Nazareth first — — — 109

S E C T I O N XIV.

Of the harmony of the gospels according to the ancients, especially Eusebius and Epiphanius, and some of the Moderns who have most nearly followed them — — — 113

S E C T I O N XV.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

- I. *Of the first excursion from Capernaum* — 123
- II. *Of the time of the journey to Nain* — 124
- III. *Of the second sabbath after the first* — 125
- IV. *Of the disciples of John* — 127
- The Conclusion* — — — 125

A LETTER

A
L E T T E R
T O

Dr. N E W C O M E,

BISHOP OF WATERFORD.

MY LORD,

I Think myself honoured by the notice your Lordship has thought proper to take of my *Harmony of the Gospels*, in the notes annexed to your own; and as the greatest candour is conspicuous in every thing your Lordship advances in opposition to my hypothesis, you will, I doubt not, receive what I shall now urge in defence of it with equal candour.

Our subject is not, indeed, of the first importance to us as *Christian Divines*, but it is a matter of some moment to us as *Criticks*. On both sides, our object, I am confident, is *truth*, and that we shall equally think we have gained an advantage, if any thing should be advanced on either side that shall contribute to the discovery of it.

With this full confidence I take the liberty to address to yourself what has occurred to me in considering your objections to my hypothesis, or rather that of Mr. Mann, but more truly still that of the Antients. For there is no doubt that our

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Lord's public ministry having extended no farther than one complete year was the opinion of the earliest christian Fathers who have mentioned the subject, and that, with very few exceptions, it continued to be so till the time of Eusebius. The opposite opinion, therefore, being the *novel* one, may rather seem to require something that should be called an apology. However as the less antient opinion (viz. that of our Lord's ministry having continued two, three, or four complete years) has long been the prevailing one, and was, I believe, universally so before Mr. Mann revived that of the antients: I who have adopted it am content to call myself an apologist on this occasion; and, as one of this class, I beg your Lordship's attention to the following replies to your remarks; and very happy should I think myself if your Lordship would condescend to enter into an amicable discussion of the question with me.

Hackneyed as the subject has been, there is much new matter before us; and if, by this or any other means, a general attention could be drawn to subjects of *christian literature*, it would (as, I dare say, your Lordship will be of opinion) be a considerable advantage, in an age in which every thing relating to *religion* is manifestly getting out of sight, even with respect to the generality of those who do read and think; which was by no means the case formerly.

Not a century ago, there was, I believe, hardly any man of letters, who did not read and study,

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so as to pretend to have some opinion or other on almost every theological question. Whether they liked or disliked, theological writings were interesting to them; whereas at present every thing that favours of theology is by the generality treated with indifference, if not with contempt.

I flatter myself, however, that the prevailing indifference to these subjects is not even now so very great, but that if divines of your Lordship's rank and character would follow the example of your Lordship, and shew that they have the subject of religion so much at heart as to *write* about it, it would again become a subject of general attention; and from *speculative religion* (and such inconveniences as, with such beings as men are, must be expected to arise from the discussion of it) some *practical good* will not fail to accrue. In all controversy, let who will be the combatants, the chances must, in the end, be in favour of truth, and religious truth has numberless connections with virtue. Bp. Pearce's Commentary, and Bp. Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, together with your Lordship's Harmony of the Gospels, already give us some prospect of the revival of a more general attention to theological studies.

All your Lordship's objections to the hypothesis I have endeavoured to support are drawn from *internal considerations*, exclusively of all foreign evidence; and though I cannot help wishing your Lordship had entered into a free discussion of the whole, I have no great objection to resting the evidence on internal arguments;

thinking the opinion of our Lord's public ministry having continued only one complete year much more agreeable to what appears on the face of the history itself than any other.

The circumstances that your Lordship thinks bear the hardest on my scheme are the following. The stay that you suppose our Lord must have made at Jerusalem and in Judea, at and immediately after the first passover, the time that must have been taken in his journey from thence to Galilee, and his travels about that country. All these articles I shall, therefore, consider in the first place, and then make a few other observations.

1. Your Lordship supposes, that Jesus continued at Jerusalem at least during all the eight days of the festival, whereas I do not find that any thing is said to have been performed by him at that passover that requires more than the few days that I have supposed him to have stayed there at that time, especially as on my scheme (and I have nothing to do with any other) he did not cleanse the temple at that time. But admitting this, it could not be the business of more than an hour or two; and both that transaction, and the *miracles* he is said to have wrought there at that time, which are only mentioned in general, and not specified, might, for any thing that we know to the contrary, have been dispatched, even in one day, and Nicodemus might visit him the evening of the day following, or even of the same day. For that visit is full as likely to have followed
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BISHOP OF WATERFORD.

the first hearing of the miracles as not; and in a crouded city, as Jerusalem was at that time, it cannot but be supposed that the news of a thing so new and extraordinary would spread through the whole in a single day.

As to what your Lordship observes about the time of Jesus cleansing the temple, in reply to Mr. Mann's arguments, Bp. Pearce's, and my own, I shall only say that, after giving the closest attention to your remarks, I do not see that it by any means amounts to a sufficient answer. I am therefore still decisively of opinion, that this transaction, perhaps the boldest, and the most provoking of any thing that he ever did, respecting the Jewish rulers, is to be referred to the last passover, when he had no farther measures to observe with respect to them. This, however, not being essential to my hypothesis concerning the duration of our Lord's ministry, I shall not enter into a particular discussion of it.

Also with respect to the transposition of the fifth and sixth chapters of John's gospel, I am fully satisfied with resting it on the evidence that has already been advanced in support of it.

2. On our Lord's being said to *tarry* in Judea, and to make more disciples than John, before his return into Galilee (John iii. 22. iv. 1.) you lay very great stress. But how the word *disciple* should necessarily import a considerable space of time, when you acknowledge, p. 9. that in the book of Acts, it is sometimes restricted to ten or seven days, I do not see. Indeed, I see no reason why,

why, if the context will admit of it, it might not be restrained to a single day, or even a few hours, just as we actually use the word *tarry* or *stay*; longer or shorter being only terms of comparison, what is long in one respect being short in another.

But what you lay the most stress on is the circumstance of Jesus making more disciples than John in this interval, interpreting this, p. 11. to mean that he made more disciples at that time than John *had ever made*. Your Lordship, however, must allow me to say, that I find no authority whatever for this interpretation, in the evangelical history, the whole tenour of which appears to me to be evidently contrary to it. It is not even at all probable that Jesus made so many disciples as John did by *all* his preaching, of whatever extent you make it. John appears to have been almost universally well received; but Jesus, for reasons that I have no occasion to enlarge upon here, was by no means so.

All that *can* be meant, therefore, is that Jesus, at this opening of his ministry, made more disciples than John did *at that particular time*, which is altogether indefinite. And after the miracles he had begun to work, and especially in Jerusalem itself, in the neighbourhood of which he then was, it can be no wonder that more attention should be given to him *at that time* than to John, who never pretended to work miracles, whose preaching was not then *new* to them,

them, and whose ministry was then nearly expiring; having indeed, according to every thing that appears, few new disciples to make. Our Lord may, therefore, well be supposed to have made more disciples than John did in these circumstances, and yet not have made very many.

But admitting that he made disciples in some considerable number, let it be considered how many converts Peter made by one discourse, and it cannot be thought very extraordinary, that the successful preaching of a few days, accompanied, as his preaching was, with the working of miracles, at that time a new and astonishing thing, and the advantage he derived from the immediately preceding testimony of John, who was held in universal esteem, and the general expectation of the Messiah, should be sufficient to account for all that the evangelist has said on this occasion; especially considering that the thing was not so considerable as to have been even noticed by any other evangelist than John, though it was prior to any thing that they have related of the ministry of Jesus, when it was least likely to escape their notice, if it had been at all considerable.

Your supposing, p. 17. that, upon this occasion, "our Lord proceeded with that reserve" and circumspection which his vicinity to the "Jewish rulers seems to have required," is hardly consistent with the supposition of his making so many disciples. John appears to have preached without any reserve at all, indeed with general approbation.

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A LETTER TO THE

Besides this indefinite expression of tarrying in Judea, and the circumstance of our Lord's making more disciples there than John, you urge our Lord's saying, John iv. 35. *Say ye not after four months and then cometh the harvest*, as if this must have been pronounced at the time of sowing barley; and therefore you fix this journey in November or December, and consequently you make our Lord's abode in Judea after this first passover about eight months; though afterwards you content yourself with saying it could not be less than one month.

But is not this, my Lord, laying a great stress upon a very precarious foundation. By our Lord's introducing this observation with *say ye not*, I should rather conclude that he was quoting a known proverbial expression, which might therefore be used as well at one time of the year as another. And surely his resting himself at the well at six o'clock, or noon, rather leads us to imagine that he was fatigued and thirsty with travelling in the heat of the day, a short time after the passover, when also water could not be very plentiful, than that it was in the winter season.

You do not seem, my Lord, to have considered sufficiently the several inconveniencies that must arise to your system from this stay of eight months in Judea, and of Jesus making so many disciples at that time. It is exceedingly evident that the great fame of Jesus in Galilee was subsequent to the miracles that he wrought after his arrival

arrival there, and that it was more especially occasioned by his curing the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, and all the sick persons that were brought to him on the evening of the same day. Now is this easily consistent with our Lord's having made more disciples than John had ever done, when he may be said to have discipled and baptized the great mass of the Jewish nation? The report of miracles wrought so publicly, as those of Jesus subsequent to the passover generally were, could not but have spread very fast in that state of the Jewish nation, in a general expectation of the Messiah, heightened by the preaching of John.

Notwithstanding the great omissions that your Lordship observes there are in some parts of the gospel history, it must certainly be thought very improbable, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke should have known of this long stay of Jesus in Judea, and not have noticed it. Other omissions are generally of such things as were similar to such as they had noticed before, or of what, or some other account, they might deem unnecessary after what they had related. But here would be an omission of what may almost be called the very first open publication of the gospel, and of the first public miracles; and of the greatest number of disciples that Jesus ever made, and likewise of the falling off of those disciples, which to me is altogether unaccountable. For on our Lord's appearance in Galilee we find him almost without attendants, and no

crouds about him till after the cure of the demoniac at Capernaum.

Many things could not but have happened in these eight months, both *discourses* and *miracles*, that could not have failed to engage the peculiar attention of any person who should have been informed of them, and have undertaken to write our Lord's history; and yet the history of his appearance in Galilee is so written by three of the evangelists, as if they had no idea of any thing very material having been done by him before. This circumstance, considering the nature of the human mind, and the usual manner of writing history, I deem to be almost a demonstration, that nothing, at least nothing comparable to what followed, had then happened.

According to my disposition of these events, the whole, as I cannot help thinking, must appear quite easy and natural. Before the passover our Lord had wrought a single miracle at a private marriage in Cana. It is probable he had not at that time preached in public at all, or wrought any miracle of a more public nature. The first of this kind appear to have been those performed at Jerusalem during the feast; and yet because they are not distinctly mentioned, even by John (who knew that no notice whatever had been taken of them by any of the other evangelists) it is probable they fell far short of the magnitude of those wrought afterwards in Galilee; and indeed it might naturally be expected that some kind of *gradation* would be observed

served in these things, and that our Lord would not pass without any interval from such a miracle as that at Cana, which was not known, in the first instance, but to the servants of a private family, to those of such *eclat* as he performed afterwards.

In Galilee also the gospel is always said to have *begun*. Thus the Jews before Pilate accusing Jesus, say, Luke xxiii. 5. *He stirreth up the people teaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.* Peter also preaching before Cornelius, says, Acts x. 37. *That word you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; and he expressly says afterwards, ver. 39. and we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem.* Could he with truth have said this, if he had known of Jesus's having preached eight months in Judea before he had preached in Galilee at all, and of his having by that preaching made more disciples than John had done in the whole course of his ministry? Indeed, I have observed in my Dissertations, that Matthew himself expressly says (speaking of Jesus's arrival in Galilee, ch. iv. ver. 17.) *From that time began Jesus to preach.* Now what is there to oppose to all this substantial evidence, but John's saying that our Lord *tarried*, that is, that he *made some stay* in Judea before he set out for Galilee, which, circumstanced as he then was, could not, I think, have been more than a few days.

I wish your Lordship would also consider another inconvenience attending this supposed long stay of Jesus in Judea, and his making so many disciples there, which I urged very strongly in my Dissertations, but of which I do not find that your Lordship has taken any notice at all. You suppose Jesus to have exercised his ministry in Judea so long, and with so much success, as to have gained a decided superiority over John, which must of course have been a thing of great *notoriety*. You also suppose him to have preached long after this, viz. according to the plan of your Harmony, till near the third passover, which is, in all, almost *two years* before the death of John, and yet Herod is plainly supposed by all the evangelists not to have heard any thing of him in all that time, insomuch that after the death of John, he really entertained the notion that Jesus must have been John himself risen from the dead; and as he then worked miracles, which he had not done before, having greater powers than he was invested with before his decease.

From the manner in which the evangelists Matthew and Mark introduce this account of the conjecture of Herod, it is evident that they had no idea of his having so much as *heard* any thing about Jesus before the death of John. Matt. xiv. 1. *At that time* (not before) *Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus*. Mark vi. 14. *And king Herod heard of him, for his fame was spread abroad*. I thought it necessary to assign some

some reason why Herod might be supposed not to have heard of Jesus during the *few weeks* that, on my hypothesis, he had preached before the death of John, ascribing it to his being probably engaged in a multiplicity of business, or pleasure. How your Lordship will be able to account for Herod's not having heard of him, preaching in public, and working miracles, as you suppose him to have done, for the space of *near two years*, I have no idea. All that you say at present, p. 26. is that "Herod first doubted who Jesus was, but at length resolved that it was John the Baptist risen from the dead;" a very extraordinary *doubt*, in the circumstances in which your Lordship places him, but a more extraordinary *determination*, after, what we must suppose, some deliberation and inquiry.

This argument is not a *reductio ad absurdum*, of the same kind with those of Euclid, but let any person consider all the circumstances of this case, especially that Herod was not a Roman, but a Jew, surrounded by Jews, and not unattentive to his religion, who had even taken some pleasure in hearing John preach, for we read, Mark vi. 20. that *he did many things* (probably things that John had recommended) *and heard him gladly*, that this preaching of Jesus had been always near his own dominions (for it was probably in his way to Galilee) and that the whole country of Judea at that time, including all Galilee, was not much larger than Yorkshire, and I think he must pronounce that the thing is hardly,
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in fact, less credible, and that a plan of a Harmony labouring under this difficulty, (and in fact every Harmony except that of Mr. Mann is thus circumstanced) cannot deserve much attention. I think I may venture to challenge any person to draw out a plan of a Harmony that shall extend the public ministry of Christ to more than one complete year, in such a manner as that this one difficulty, not to mention many others, shall not be insuperable. But perhaps what strikes me so much may not strike your Lordship at all. I wish, however, your Lordship had attended to it, and given us your thoughts upon it.

3. The journey from Judea to Cana you suppose, p. 17. to have taken six or seven days; whereas his stay at Sychar is limited to two days, which, according to the Jewish phraseology might mean no more than part of two days, and the whole journey from Jerusalem to Galilee was but of three days, according to our Lord's own mode of travelling; and as the part of Judea from which our Lord set out for Galilee was probably the most remote from Jerusalem, the place he had left (and he would naturally recede farther and farther from it) the journey might not be more than two days. Now in my computation, I have allowed four days for it, and could have taken another day, or more, if I had thought it necessary. Surely, my Lord, there can be no great improbability in this. Let us now proceed to Galilee.

4. To

4. To invalidate my computation of time, you suppose what the evangelist does not mention, and what appears to me to be by no means necessary. "Jesus," you say, "must have remained at Cana a few days, let us say four, because Jesus's presence at Cana was notified at Capernaum before the nobleman set out to meet him." Now John, who is the only evangelist that mentions the transaction, only says, chap iv. 47. *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee* (not to Cana) Now as Jesus had taught at Jerusalem, made some disciples in Judea, and stayed two days at Sychar, it might very well be known at Capernaum, a place of great resort, that he had left Judea, was travelling towards Galilee, and even that he would certainly go to Cana, and the nobleman might set out before it was known that Jesus was actually arrived at Cana. It is not impossible, therefore, but both of them might arrive there the same day. Besides you make the distance between Capernaum and Cana no more than twenty three miles, which is so small, that Jesus might have arrived at Cana in the evening, and it might have been known at Capernaum the next morning; and the nobleman did probably set out in the morning, because we find that Jesus pronounced his son cured at the seventh hour, or an hour after noon.

5. Your Lordship lays great stress on the stay that you suppose Jesus made at Nazareth and its neighbourhood before he arrived at Capernaum, allowing

allowing eight days for his preaching before his arrival at Nazareth, and four days at Nazareth. But I think I have shewn unanswerably, that this visit to Nazareth was subsequent to his preaching at Capernaum, and therefore shall not argue it in this place.

6. But the argument on which your Lordship seems to lay the greatest stress is drawn from what is said of our Lord's *going about, all Galilee*, Matt. iv. 23. after his arrival at Capernaum, subsequent to his curing the demoniac in the synagogue there. A month, you say, is a moderate space of time for these transactions; whereas I allow no more than a week to them.

Surely, my Lord, in this, as in a former case, you lay too great stress on *general expressions*, which, after all, you yourself cannot suppose to be understood quite literally; for *all Galilee* cannot mean here every town and village in Galilee; and if it *must* be restricted, why may it not be to the places in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, especially Chorazin and Bethsaida, which were probably within a few miles of Capernaum. Our Lord himself seems to lead to this construction, by saying, after he had left Capernaum, Mark i. 38. *Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth.* And as it is evident that a single day had sufficed him at Capernaum, so that he was obliged to depart, on account of the crouds that resorted to him, less than a day might well suffice for any other place.

Had

Had our Lord's perambulation been particularly described, so that you could have written a complete *Itinerary* of his journey, this argument would have deserved more attention; but phrases so indeterminate as these, and by writers who are known, and acknowledged, to use other phrases of the greatest extent in very limited senses, surely will not bear so much stress. Your Lordship supposes that this progress through Galilee was about seventy miles. But the supposition is altogether arbitrary. To have visited *every place* he must have travelled seventy times as far, to have walked the boundary would have answered no purpose, but to visit a few of the principal places in the neighbourhood of the town from which he set out, might not require a journey of more than a few days. And, as I have indeed already observed, it is after this very journey, that he is said by Mark to have returned to Capernaum *after some days* only, Mark ii. 1. and according to the Vulgate translation, it is *after eight days*, and yet this very evangelist says, that on this journey *he preached throughout all Galilee*, Mark i. 39.

Your Lordship says, p. 21. that "before the
 " embassy from John Jesus had actually wrought
 " a great proportion of his miracles at Chorazin
 " and Bethsaida, and that, allowing time for
 " these miracles, as a sufficient ground for so
 " solemn a denunciation, must create an em-
 " barrassment to the adopter of Mr. Mann's hy-
 " pothesis." Now, really, my Lord, I feel no

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kind

kind of embarrassment on the occasion; when even a single miracle, publicly performed in each of those places, and especially as much as we know to have been transacted at Capernaum in the evening of a single day, when our Lord cured all the sick that were brought to him, would abundantly justify all the denunciations, solemn as they are. In fact, his repeating the same thing day after day in the same place, for a month together, would not have produced any more effect, probably even less, than his doing it in one day, provided the miracles he wrought there were publicly known, and universally acknowledged.

The preaching of our Saviour is not to be compared to that of Christian ministers at this day, when no miracles are wrought, but only truths laid down, and motives inculcated, which require *time* to produce any considerable effect. The proper subject of his preaching lay in a small compass, viz. *the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel*, or something else to the same effect; and all that he had to *do* was to confirm this assertion, and enforce this belief, by well attested miracles. His moral *instructions* were given only occasionally, as he found opportunity. He had, therefore, no long sermons to make, but only to say and do what might leave an impression on the minds of his auditors, that he came with a commission from God, and especially enable them to infer that he was the person foretold by the prophets under the character of their *Messiah*. Considering our Lord's business in this view,

view, I cannot help thinking *one year*, in so small a country as Judea, a much more natural and probable period for his public ministry, than three or four.

7. Your Lordship maintains the reading of *πασχα* in John vi. 4. though Mr. Mann supposes it to be an interpolation, and Bp. Pearce conjectures that the whole verse may be so. This is an instance in which the minds of different persons are very differently impressed by the same thing. I think it certain that Irenæus had not this word in his copy of the gospel, whereas your Lordship thinks, p. 27. he might have *overlooked* it, notwithstanding it made so much for his purpose to have discovered and noticed it. As to Mr. Mann's argument, that the early christian Fathers could not have supposed, as they did, that our Lord preached only one year, if, in their copies of the gospel, this text had been the same that it is in ours, you content yourself with saying that "too strict attention and accuracy in the ancient fathers are here supposed." Now I will allow, with your Lordship, that with respect to justness of reasoning, and some other matters, extreme accuracy is not to be expected of them, but in a thing so palpable as this, not to have discovered this circumstance must imply greater inattention, and stupidity, than almost any man, and much more a body of men, and a series of writers, can possibly be suspected of. I cannot help thinking therefore, that the distinct mention of the three passovers which we now find in the

gospel of John would necessarily have precluded any such opinion as that our Lord's public ministry did not continue more than one complete year; whereas, excepting the case of Irenæus only; who, however, does not pretend to have had *this* support of his opinion, and whose prejudices may well enough be accounted for, this was the opinion of all the learned Fathers for several centuries. After the time of Irenæus, if not before, the subject was certainly *attended to*, and even then both Austin and Jerom, two of the most learned men of their time, evidently considered our Lord's public ministry as included within the space of little more than two years.

That even Eusebius, who probably first adopted the hypothesis that has prevailed ever since, had not, however, this reading (on whatever else he might ground his opinion) I still think very probable. For consistently with this I do not see how he could maintain, as he does, that the three first evangelists have recorded the actions of our Saviour for *one year only*, viz. after the imprisonment of John the Baptist; since events that, I believe, all Harmonists refer to periods before this passover are noticed by the other evangelists, as having happened after the imprisonment of John; and a whole year at least must necessarily have intervened between this passover and that in which our Lord suffered. According to your Lordship's own arrangement of the facts, a very great part of the evangelical history belongs to the time before this passover. For you make it
the

the third of our Lord's ministry, and you place the imprisonment of John presently after the first passover. Consequently your Lordship's idea of the distribution of events in the gospel history is widely different indeed from that of Eusebius. Nor do I think it possible to form a Harmony agreeable to his idea of all the events recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke falling within one year, and retain this reading.

Having now replied to all your Lordship's objections to my hypothesis, you will allow me to express my regret that you should have reprobated it without considering *all* the arguments by which it is supported. I should have been particularly glad to have known in what light several, at least, of the most considerable of them appear to the mind of a person so ingenuous as your Lordship. I shall take the liberty on this occasion to recall some of them to your Lordship's attention, and I wish that if you should think proper to reconsider this subject, you would make some observation with respect to them.

If the internal evidence had been *all* that we could have access to, we must have been obliged to acquiesce in it, and have been content to make the most of it. But it appears to me very extraordinary that when positive external evidence is actually within our reach, no regard whatever should be paid to it. Now it happens that many of the most respectable of the early christian writers have given their decisive evidence in favour of our Lord's public ministry having continued

tinued only one complete year; and their being ever so fanciful and weak in some things cannot affect their testimony to such a *fact* as this, which must have been within the knowledge of their immediate predecessors; and their mentioning it without the least doubt or hesitation on the subject, implies that they had no idea of there being any other opinion about it. The earliest writers were certainly the most likely to have the best information concerning this fact; and if any misapprehension should arise about it, it is most likely to have arisen in later ages.

Your Lordship, I observe by the way, dates the first year of our Saviour's ministry by A. D. 30. Now it is, I believe, the unanimous opinion of the antients that our Lord was crucified when the Gemini were consuls, which was A. D. 29. If by A. D. your Lordship means not the year of the vulgar æra, but the true year of the life of Jesus, besides its being a singular method of notation, it will, I think, involve your Lordship in great difficulties with respect to the received chronology of other capital events of those times.

Neglecting the proper external evidence, I wish your Lordship had attended more particularly to the conduct of Luke compared with itself only. He dates, with remarkable circumstantiality, the beginning of the preaching of John, from which it is almost a certainty that it was A. D. 28. or the fifteenth year of the proper reign of Tiberius, after the death of Augustus; and, according to the course of his narrative, as all
persons

persons must have concluded if no other gospel had been extant, it was in the year immediately following this that Christ suffered. This therefore must have been A. D. 29. the very year in which the Gemini were consuls. Now would he not have prevented this necessary inference, if he had been aware that it was not agreeable to the truth; having, according to your idea of his conduct, omitted every note of time that could possibly distinguish the three or four years which you suppose to have intervened between these events.

On the hypothesis that I have adopted his conduct is quite natural. For he gives a precise date for the preaching of John, but does not give any date for the death of Christ, because, according to his narrative, it evidently happened the year following. Surely he who has dated with so much precision the less important event of the preaching of John, would not have failed to fix the date of the more important event, the death of Christ, if he had not taken it for granted, that it might be easily and certainly inferred from the course of his narrative.

With respect to the omission of any mention of our Lord's attendance at the public feasts of the Jews, which is certainly a difficulty on your Lordship's hypothesis, you are pleased to say, p. 15. that "from his baptism to the second passover, Jesus was so employed in the great work of his ministry, that he went not up to Jerusalem at any Jewish feast, except that recorded

recorded in John ch. ii." Now surely he who expressly said, Matt. iii. 15. that it became him to fulfil *all righteousness*, would not neglect so important a part of the duty of a Jew. And if his ministry lasted, as you suppose, three years and a half, he had surely time enough to attend to the proper duties of it, without omitting others which were acknowledged to be of universal obligation. Besides, his appearance at the public feasts must have been of particular consequence to the publication of his credentials as the Messiah, and indeed of his preaching in general; because every male Jew was obliged to attend at all those feasts, so that there would have been no body left in the country, with whom he could exercise whatever it is that you mean by the *great work of his ministry*, but the women and children, the old and the infirm.

Besides these articles, I hope your Lordship will not fail particularly to consider the extreme improbability of Herod's not being able to distinguish between John and Jesus on the supposition of our Saviour having preached so long as you make him to have done before the death of John, viz. two years and a half, and two whole years of it after his imprisonment.

Your Lordship will also please to attend to the very remarkable omission of all notes of time for so many years as you suppose to be omitted in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and give some attention to the other articles advanced by me in my eighth section, p. 48, &c. But without considering

considering the plan of my Harmony, or the arguments that I have advanced in favour of it, I wish your Lordship would cast your eye deliberately over your own, and consider how very little of the gospel history you include in the transactions of the first year of our Lord's public ministry. You suppose him to work some miracles, not specified, at Jerusalem, and to discourse with Nicodemus; to make disciples in Judea, but without specifying either discourses or miracles, in a residence of several months. You farther make him travel through Samaria, cure the nobleman's son at Cana, preach one sabbath at Nazareth, call Simon and Andrew, cure the demoniac at Capernaum, a leper in the neighbouring country, and also a paralytic person, and finally, to call Matthew to attend him. This is all that is recorded in the first year.

Compare this with the business which you throw into the second, and especially the third year, and I cannot help thinking that the distribution will appear to your Lordship's attentive reconsideration exceedingly unnatural. The first events would necessarily make the greatest impression on the minds of our Saviour's followers and historians, and subsequent transactions of a similar nature would be those that would be passed over in silence; a conduct which the first view of my calendar appears to be actually observed, according to the hypothesis that I have adopted.

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I shall not here enter into any discussion of other incidental points of difference between your Lordship and myself, as that of *the inspiration of the evangelists as writers*, which you adopt, and which I consider as nothing less than a millstone about the neck of Christianity, and from which I would, therefore, willingly disengage it.

With respect to the subject of this letter, I am happy in agreeing with your Lordship, that "all the real difficulties in harmonizing the gospels, will at length yield to the efforts of rational criticism," and, notwithstanding my attachment to other pursuits, I hope I can also with truth, say with your Lordship, that "the advancement of sacred literature is the end of my studies, and the object of my ambition."

With the greatest respect for your lordship's character, I am,

My Lord,

You Lordship's

Very humble Servant,

And Fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

Calne, August 1779.

J. PRIESTLEY.

A SECOND

A
S E C O N D L E T T E R
T O T H E
B I S H O P O F W A T E R F O R D ,
L A T E O F O S S O R Y .

M Y L O R D ,

IT is with sincere pleasure that I find your Lordship has entered so largely into the discussion of the question concerning the duration of our Lord's ministry, as I flatter myself that some new light will, by this means, be thrown upon it, whether it be decided to general satisfaction or not. I should have made this reply much sooner, had not a tedious illness, from which I several times had little hope of recovery, and likewise a total change in my situation and affairs (which left me no opportunity of consulting books, or writing any thing) intervened. But as soon as ever I found myself in tolerable health, and sufficiently at leisure, I sat down to read your Lordship's letter to me with care, and to write what I now present to your Lordship, and our readers, in reply to it.

If my address to your Lordship be not in a very high degree respectful, I do assure you it does not by any means correspond with my feelings and intentions. The discussion of this ques-

tion, which I find is interesting to many christian critics (and this is, I believe, the first time that it has ever been properly discussed) is of itself highly agreeable to me, who love these studies; and to discuss it with a person of your Lordship's learning, and most amiable candour, I consider as highly honourable to me.

Considering this business as one that necessarily draws my attention to the sacred writings (which, with whatever view we look into them, with due attention, cannot fail to reward our search) this amicable controversy has charms for me as well as for your Lordship. And since, as you justly observe, p. 16. "studying the scriptures may be compared to repeating philosophical experiments, in the course of which the most unexpected discoveries are often made," I hope we shall neither of us desist from this investigation, till nothing more shall remain that we shall be able to advance in order to complete it.

To be as little tedious as possible, I shall touch but slightly, if at all, upon any topics on which I shall be able to advance nothing that shall appear to myself to be *new*, or materially to affect what your Lordship has advanced on the same subject. By this means the whole of the evidence on the greater part of the several topics will soon be produced, and the controversy will pretty quickly come to its proper termination; at least all the evidence that each of us shall be able to collect will be before the public, whose decision will follow in due time.

To

To introduce as much distinctness as I can into the conduct of this argument, and thereby to make it less tiresome to your Lordship, and to our readers, I shall, in this, and all the subsequent letters, discuss each article in a separate section.

SECTION I.

Of the testimony of the Christian Fathers.

IN the first place, I wish your Lordship to reconsider the testimony of the early christian Fathers, which appears to me to be more decisive than you seem to be aware of, and to attend to some circumstances relating to it, which you seem to have overlooked.

Notwithstanding you endeavour to qualify some of my authorities, you do not deny, that it was a received opinion with several of the christian Fathers, and especially some of the earliest of them, that our Saviour's ministry did not extend much beyond a year. Your Lordship thinks you can account for this; but when you shall reconsider the reasons you have produced, I cannot help thinking you will be sensible that they are altogether insufficient for the purpose.

You say, p. 130. "They thought that the
" three first evangelists recorded only our Lord's
" actions for one year, after John's imprison-
" ment; and they seem to have put the more
" public

“ public part of Jesus’s ministry for the whole
“ of it.”

Now I wonder your Lordship should not have considered both *how* they came to do this, and likewise what is the necessary *consequence* of supposing even thus much. Even Eusebius, the first who extended our Lord’s ministry beyond two years and a half, and, as far as appears, all other writers, till the very moderns, supposed that the three first evangelists related only the events of one year; that is, they go upon the idea, that only one year intervened between the imprisonment of John and the death of Christ. But this space, by your Lordship’s own confession, includes all the events that Mr. Mann and myself endeavour to bring within the compass of a year. So that whatever the ancients thought of that part of our Lord’s ministry which preceded the imprisonment of John the Baptist (which they suppose to be recorded by John) they all agreed with me in every thing that your Lordship finds the hardest to be reconciled to in my hypothesis.

Whatever journeys your Lordship puts to my account, the same you must put to theirs; and every mile you make our Saviour to walk per day affects them just as much as myself. We also perfectly agree in the time allowed for the instruction of the apostles, and every thing else that you can say was of much importance to our Lord’s great object; nor is it possible your Lordship can make us differ much with
respect

respect to the various perambulations of all Galilee, the time taken up by the mission of the twelve, or the seventy, &c. And yet all the absurdity and embarrassment that you imagine you find in the scheme is put to the account of us poor moderns only. This is, indeed, very hard, when all the ancients to a man, of whatever duration they made the *whole* of Christ's ministry, are equally chargeable with it, and led us into it.

Your Lordship says, p. 125. "It is unknown to us what events Eusebius ranged between the imprisonment of John and the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, and therefore his distribution of them may have been indefensible." But it cannot be unknown to us what events he ranged between the imprisonment of John and the death of Christ, because it is all that is related by the three other evangelists, and all that your Lordship particularly objects to in my hypothesis.

In fact, your Lordship differs more from those of the ancients whom you quote against me than I do, and much more materially. I agree with them with respect to all the busy part of our Lord's life, that is, every thing in which your Lordship can pretend to find any difficulty, and I differ from them only with respect to a period in which there are few or no proper events recorded. Whereas your Lordship agrees with them with respect to neither.

Admitting what Eusebius, and all the ancients, supposed (and on what good authority can we dispute

dispute it) that the three first evangelists related the events of only one year of our Lord's life, can your Lordship think it credible, that they should all confine themselves to the *last* of three or four, when the whole was equally before them. Was there no event in the whole compass of the two or three preceding years that they thought worth singling out and recording? This would be more especially extraordinary in the case of Luke, who relates the circumstances of our Saviour's birth so very minutely, and his visit to Jerusalem at twelve years of age. A total silence in such a writer as this, to the two or three first years of the opening of our Lord's ministry, is altogether unaccountable.

Your Lordship should likewise have better considered *how* these antient writers came to adopt this opinion, supposing it not to be true; for the account your Lordship gives of it has not, in my opinion, a sufficient appearance of probability, and is not countenanced by the only evidence you have produced in favour of it.

Your Lordship says, p. 130. "It is likewise clear that their notion was founded on a mistaken interpretation of a passage in Isaiah;" meaning what he says of *the acceptable year of the Lord*. Now, *a priori*, it is much more probable that a particular text should be accommodated to a well known fact, and be imagined to refer to it, than that a fact, which could not but have been well known in the apostolical age, should, in the age immediately succeeding, come
to

to be disbelieved on account of the interpretation of a particular text, and a text which must have been grossly mistaken before it could have been imagined to bear such a sense. When all the prophetic language is highly figurative, who would have thought of interpreting such an expression as *the acceptable year of the Lord* literally, if it had not been countenanced by an opinion previously established on better authority, viz. that our Lord did not preach publickly more than one year?

Your Lordship produces two authorities in proof of the opinion having been derived from the prophecy, and not the interpretation of the prophecy from the opinion. The first is that of Clemens Alexandrinus, who himself maintained the opinion. His words, as your Lordship quotes them, p. 130. are "That he must preach only a year is thus written. *He sent me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*" Now in this I am far from seeing any proof that the interpretation of the prophecy gave rise to the opinion. On the contrary, the construction that I should put upon it would be, that it was an attempt to accommodate a particular text to a received opinion.

Your Lordship's other authority is from Irenæus who combats the opinion, and speaking of the Valentinians, who held it, says *Duodecimo mense dicunt eum passum—et ex propheta tentant hoc ipsum confirmare. Scriptum enim est, vocare annum dei acceptum—Illi autem ut figmentum suum*

de eo quod scriptum est, *vocare annum dei acceptum*, affirmant, dicunt eum uno anno prædicasse. "That" is, that he suffered in the twelfth month they endeavour to confirm from the prophet, for it is written to proclaim the acceptable year of God. For they, to support their imagination from the preceding words, say that he preached one "year." This I even think less to your Lordship's purpose. This writer is so far from saying that the Valentinians derived their opinion from the prophecy, that he evidently supposes the opinion to have had an existence previous to their interpretation of the prophecy, and only charges them with an endeavour to strengthen their opinion by the prophecy.

In short, my Lord, every thing at which your Lordship revolts in the system that I contend for appears to have been universally received among christians in the primitive times; and Valentinus, who was a man of learning, but, like too many others of that age, deeply tinged with the philosophy of Plato, adopted it, not as having any connection with his heresy; but only making a bad use of his ingenuity, as Origen did afterwards, and giving a whimsical reason for an acknowledged fact. But, my Lord, what is there in the scriptures themselves for which whimsical reasons have not been given? And if every thing was to be rejected because some have argued weakly in support of it, nothing of the most genuine scripture history would be left.

After

After your Lordship's general concession, and the preceding remarks upon it, I have no occasion to scrutinize every particular evidence. I shall therefore only make slight remarks on a few of them, and then proceed to other general observations relating to the subject.

I wonder your Lordship should so much as mention *the epistles of Ignatius*, as if they could add any strength to your argument with critics of the present age, when your Lordship must know that such eminent critics as Salmasius, Blondel and Daillé contend, not that the *larger* epistles, only, but the *lesser* also are spurious. The candid Mosheim says "The whole question relating to the epistles of Ignatius in general seems to me to labour under much obscurity, and to be embarrassed with many difficulties." As to the larger epistles, which your Lordship quotes after M. Whiston, p. 133. I believe that even the Papists in general reject them.

Dr. Lardner says that, "whether the smaller epistles themselves of Ignatius be genuine is a difficult question;" tho', upon the whole, he is of opinion that they are genuine, with some interpolations. *Credibility*, P. 2. vol. 1. p. 153.

It is true that Tertullian, in one place, says that "our Lord was revealed in the 12th year of Tiberius," tho' in another place he determines the death of our Lord to the 15th of Tiberius. But to make this writer consistent with himself, and with all the other christian fathers, who uniformly mention the 15th, and never the 12th of

Tiberius in any view, I would conjecture that, instead of XV, some transcriber separated the parts of the V, and thereby made them into II, which would make the reading XII, instead of XV. This is a mere conjecture, but I think not an unnatural one.

Since Lactantius places the death of Christ on the 15th of Tiberius, just like Clemens Alexandrinus, and this was the year in which John preached (it is plain enough, tho' as your Lordship observes, p. 133, "he no where informs us " how long he thought the ministry of Christ " lasted;") that he could not give much more than a year to it. Indeed, it seems to have been taken so much for granted, that the gospel history was comprized within the space of a year, that, without due consideration, the early Fathers include all the preaching of John in the same year. And in this we cannot blame them much, since the whole was not two complete years.

In the preface to my *English Harmony*, I quoted the testimony of Archelaus Bishop of Mesopotamia, in the reign of Probus, about A. D. 278. This testimony, I would observe by the way, being that of an eminent bishop in the East, is certainly of more value than that of Irenæus in Gaul, or any of the Western Fathers. After his time, Jerom, who resided much in the East, does not pretend to make the duration of Christ's ministry more than two years.

Valesius, as quoted by Lardner (*Credibility*, P. 2. vol. 5, p. 109.) says, that " all the Antients
" compute

"compute no more than one year in Christ's
"ministry."

Chemnitius, who recites all the opinions he could collect of the Antients, and who himself supposed Christ to have preached three years and a half, begins with saying, p. 9. "*Vulgaris opinio, etiam apud Vetustissimos, fuit, omnia illa dicta et facta, quæ in Evangelica historia a baptismo Christi usque ad passionem ejus describuntur, unius tantum anni spatio comprehendenda esse.*"

I shall now proceed to remarks of a more general nature relating to this subject.

Your Lordship has made no observation on the general testimony of the Antients in favour of Jesus having been crucified when the Gemini were cc. suls, which was A. D. 29. This I think cannot well be invalidated; and tho' you say, p. 135, you do not propose to "discuss points of chronology, which rest on authorities beyond the compass of the gospels themselves," I do not see how we can help considering them when they may be of real use to settle a point of controversy, such as we are now discussing. Now this year, A. D. 29, immediately following the proper 15th of Tiberius (reckoning from the time that the years of Augustus ended, which I think must be the only proper method) the year in which John began to preach, is certainly an argument for the short duration of our Lord's ministry that well deserved your Lordship's attention. With me, I own, it weighs considerably, as I think it must do with others, unless your
Lordship

Lordship shall take some method to invalidate it.

It is observable, that long after the opinion began to be formed, that our Saviour's ministry must have continued at least two years, all the Fathers, even so late as Jerom, still speak of our Lord's suffering in the 15th of Tiberius, which is really inconsistent with it. For what could be meant by christian writers, by the 15th of Tiberius, but the same year that Luke meant by it. In fact, it must have been copied from Luke. But this is the very year in which that evangelist says that John began to preach. There is no room, therefore, for the extension of our Lord's ministry beyond one year.

It cannot indeed be strictly true, that our Saviour died in the same year in which John began to preach. But the early christians, having a general idea that the whole subject of Luke's gospel, beginning with the preaching of John, was comprized within the space of little more than a year, they might, writing not as chronologers, but only mentioning facts incidentally, give the date that Luke begins with to all the events comprized within it promiscuously.

Or, since all the most early writers who mention any date of the death of Christ according to the consuls say that it happened when the Gemini were in that office; and their consulship was the fifteenth of the complete years of Tiberius, they might omit that part of the year after August in which Augustus died, and give it to Augustus.

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That some of them did compute the years of Tiberius in this manner will appear presently.

Either of these suppositions will tolerably well account for the slight inaccuracy. But on no consideration can the fixing of the death of Christ to the fifteenth of Tiberius be consistent with the opinion of our Lord's preaching much more than a year, except that of reckoning the years of Tiberius in a manner different from that of Luke, for which none of these writers makes any apology, as might have been expected, considering how much better Luke's gospel was known to Christians than any other writings in which the years of Tiberius could be mentioned. Indeed that any historian properly dates the years of Tiberius so that any of them shall fall within the life of Augustus, is, I think, not probable. If, however, your Lordship can produce any evidence of it from history, I shall stand corrected. Notwithstanding Augustus's delegation of the rights of empire to Tiberius, in order to ease himself of the trouble, he was evidently supreme in the empire to the very day of his death.

Epiphanius makes the 15th year of Tiberius coincide with A. D. 28, so that he reckoned the years of Tiberius from the death of Augustus. *Opera*, vol. i. p. 442.

Eusebius did the same, for he makes the year in which Tiberius was consul the fourth time, which was A. D. 21, to be the 7th of his reign. He therefore reckoned the whole year in which Augustus died to belong to him, and did not
make

A LETTER TO THE

make the years of Tiberius to commence till the year following. Consequently, A. D. 29, in which the Gemini were consuls, and in which according to the Ancients Christ suffered, was the 15th of Tiberius. *Hist. Eccles. Lib. 1. Cap. 10.*

Prosper, as quoted by Valesius, in his notes on Eusebius, (*Hist. Eccl. Lib. 1. Cap. 10.*) who agrees with Epiphanius in making the duration of Christ's ministry two years and a half, also reckons the years of Tiberius from the year after the death of Augustus; and therefore he says that the 15th in which the Gemini were consuls, tho' said by some to be the year in which Christ suffered, could not be the year for that event, since that was the year in which he was baptized.

It is true that Clemens Alexandrinus, after saying, p. 339, that Tiberius reigned 22 years, says that according to *some* he reigned 26. But it is plain, from his manner of expression, that himself, and probably all other christians, supposed Tiberius to have reigned only 22 years, and therefore computed them from the death of Augustus.

The other opinion is evidently spoken of by him as held only by a few persons, and this I believe is the only notice that is taken of that opinion. But let some passage in any historian be produced, in which some particular year of Tiberius, as the first, the second, or the third, &c. is mentioned, when it shall appear that the years must be reckoned from Tiberius being made partner with Augustus in the empire. Le Clerc, whose hypothesis stood in need of it, only proves that
Tiberius

Tiberius was admitted to imperial honours and rights before the death of Augustus; but he brings no proof that the years of his reign were ever dated from that term.

On this subject, of the opinion of the antient christians, I would beg leave to make one remark, which appears to me to be of considerable consequence. The opinion that Christ's ministry was only of one year's duration goes so far back into antiquity, that the origin of it cannot be traced. It was not only held by the Valentinians (who seem only to have distinguished themselves by giving whimsical reasons for it, as they did for other things relating to Christ and the gospel history) but also by those to whom Epiphanius gave the name of *Alogi*, because, as he says, they questioned the authority of John's gospel, believing Christ to be a mere man, and asserting that this was the doctrine of the apostles, and of the generality of christians till the time of Victor.

As these people had no name by which they were distinguished from other christians before the time of Epiphanius, which was late in the fourth century, it may be concluded that till that time they were considered as a part of the body of christians in general, and that they were not deemed to be *heretical* till the general prevalence of other opinions, introduced from heathenism, gradually diminishing their numbers, made it necessary to distinguish them from the now more numerous body by some peculiar appellation.

Had the peculiar opinions, as they are now considered, of these *Alogi*, as well as those of the *Nazarenes*, or *Ebionites* (who likewise held that Christ was a mere man) had an origin after the times of the apostles, it would not have been difficult to trace it; and like other sects, they would immediately have got some distinguishing denomination, either assumed by themselves, or given them by others; whereas these *Alogi* passed undistinguished in the common mass of Christians till the fourth century. I therefore think their opinions highly respectable, and not to be rejected without good authority.

I will allow your Lordship, however, to suppose that it may bias me in favour of this particular opinion of the *Alogi*, that they were *unitarians*; as, on the other hand, the same circumstance may contribute a little, without being perceived, to give your Lordship, who is a trinitarian, some little prejudice against it. Being *men* we are all subject to these influences, and if we are not aware of this bias ourselves, others will suppose it for us.

Your Lordship says, p. 134, that "by A. D. "you mean the true year of Christ's life." This certainly required some explanation, because, as far as I know, it is a mode of notation that has not been used before. But I wish your Lordship had considered how the date you assign to the commencement of Christ's preaching would have agreed with any particular date of the birth or death of Christ. I do not, however, wish to draw
your

your Lordship into any chronological discussion, for which you may have no taste, or which you may think unnecessary. I only mention the easy agreement of the different dates of the birth and death of Christ, with the duration of his ministry on my hypothesis, as an argument in its favour. I indeed make Christ to have died in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and therefore to have been near thirty-five when he began his ministry; but this corresponds sufficiently well with an historian observing, in general, that he was *about thirty*.

SECTION II.

Of the conduct of Luke in giving a date to the preaching of John the Baptist.

I HAD laid considerable stress on the inference which I said was necessarily drawn from the date that occurs in the gospel of Luke, who fixes with remarkable circumstantiality the time of the commencement of John's preaching, but assigns no date to the death of Christ, an event of much more consequence. I therefore say, that his conduct is not consistent, but on the supposition of one of these events being, in his idea, so connected with the other, in the course of his narrative, as that the date of it might easily be inferred from the date of the other, which I as-

fert, from the tenor of his gospel, to be the case; and in this, as your Lordship must, I think, acknowledge, I have the sanction of all the antients.

It was their unanimous opinion, that only one year intervened between the imprisonment of John and the death of Jesus. And what is there in the history of Luke, from the commencement of the preaching of John to his imprisonment, that is, to Jesus's journey to Galilee, which followed immediately upon it, that can be supposed, by any reasonable construction, to take up more than a few months? It is all related in his third chapter, and the thirteen first verses of the fourth, which contains an account of nothing more than the preaching of John before the baptism of Jesus, and the temptation.

Now certainly my Lord, whatever might really be the case, Luke relates nothing of the events of this interval that can be supposed to take up a year; and this I see, by your Harmony, is your Lordship's own idea of the fact. You date the beginning of John's preaching in A. D. 29. and Jesus's journey to Galilee consequent on the imprisonment of John, about eight months after the passover, in the year following, including your own eight months stay of Jesus in Judea. And as your Lordship is disposed to shorten that stay to about four months, you can hardly make it a year in all.

In your Lordship's letter to me you seem to comprize all the events from the beginning of
John's

John's preaching to the first passover, in the space of about six months, p. 163 ; which with the four more for the stay of Jesus in Judea, make but eight in all. It will, therefore, follow from the testimony of the antients, and your Lordship's own concessions together, that Luke *has* given a date by which the death of Christ may be sufficiently determined, viz. to the year immediately following that in which John began to preach.

Your Lordship says, p. 137, " I rather think
" that St. Luke furnished such circumstantial
" dates to shew in what remarkable period of
" the world, in how very fit a time, the gospel
" began to be preached. This sufficed for the
" great purposes of christianity, without preci-
" sion as to other events."

But, my Lord, Luke himself says nothing of all this. And considering how very circumstantial the date is, I cannot think it at all probable that he had any such idea. If he had thought that precise year so proper for the beginning of John's preaching, and he had mentioned it with that view, he must either have supposed it to be *obviously* so, and therefore that it did not require to be pointed out, or he would have informed us wherein the propriety lay. Now can your Lordship say that the gospel might not as properly have begun to be preached in the 14th or 16th, as in the 15th of Tiberius, or when Lysanias had not been tetrarch of Abilene? &c. It is plain your Lordship has no idea of the importance of that particular year, because you say you cannot
determine

determine whether it was the 15th, reckoned from the time when Tiberius was admitted partner in the empire, or from his being sole emperor.

Had this evangelist contented himself with saying that the gospel was first preached in the reign of Tiberius, or when the world was at peace, &c. &c. &c. there might have been some colour for your Lordship's conjecture. At present I see none at all. Besides, there are different epocha's with respect to the preaching of the gospel, and the first, or the preaching of John, does not seem to be of more importance than others that succeeded. Was not the beginning of the preaching of Christ himself, or at least his death, of as much consequence? And was not the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as important as any of them all?

In fact, my Lord, Luke appears evidently to have given a date to his history just as other historians have done to theirs, without any particular regard to the importance of one event more than another, but merely to shew its place in universal time, and its relation to other events. But one date would not have been sufficient for this purpose, if, in his own idea, the whole narrative had not been so closely connected, that the place of all the important events might be determined from the date that he had given.

Without this idea, and especially on the idea of his having omitted whole years without any note to indicate the omission, the whole compass and termination of his history would be altogether undefined,

undefined, and one of the most important events in it would have no date at all. Consequently his giving so circumstantial a date to the beginning of it would be very imperfectly answered, and he would therefore be inconsistent with himself.

Your Lordship says, from Newton (tho' I do not see its perfect consistency with what you had just observed before) that "the times of the birth and passion of Christ were not material to religion"; but they were as material as the commencement of John's preaching, and if some "remarkable period" was requisite for the one, I should expect periods as remarkable for the other. Upon your Lordship's idea of Luke's history, then, he must either have thought them not equally material, or he must have dated the one for some other reasons than its being so very material.

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of the ignorance of Herod, and of other Jews, concerning Jesus, at the time of the death of John the Baptist.

I HAD represented it as a great difficulty on your Lordship's scheme, that Herod seems not to have heard of Jesus till after the death of John; though, according to your Lordship's hypothesis, he had preached publicly almost two years, and the greatest part of the time alone, John being in prison. Upon my hypothesis, Jesus had not been so much exposed to public notice more than between four and five weeks; and therefore I suppose, that being, probably, like other kings and great men, engaged in a multiplicity of business or pleasure, he might not have heard of Jesus.

This your Lordship, p. 104, is pleased to call "a loose and topical argument," that at best it is no more than "a negative argument," and that "it is a maxim laid down in books on the art of reasoning, that *Argumentum non valet negative.*"

That the argument is *topical*, that is, relating to the subject or topic, is certain; but that it is therefore *loose*, or of little moment, does not follow. And your Lordship must know that, whatever may be laid down in books on the art of reasoning, a negative argument may be so circumstanced,

stanced, as to be fairly intitled to more regard than some positive ones.

In another place, page 98, your Lordship vouchsafes to call it "an ingenious argument," and acknowledges that it points to a *difficulty* in your Lordship's scheme. But I conceive your Lordship did not see it in it's full force, when you said, p. 101, "it may be fairly asked, whether my scheme is not as strongly affected by this difficulty as your Lordship's." But if an interval of *five weeks*, and one of almost *two years*, makes no real difference in this case, I am unable to conceive what can. It is true, it is not a difference, as it is called, in *kind*, but it is such a difference in *degree* as, in this case, is almost as decisive. But I will consider more particularly all the circumstances in which you say our two schemes agree in this respect; and I shall, at the same time, point out to your Lordship the circumstances in which they differ.

It is true, as your Lordship says, that we must both suppose that Jesus wrought miracles at the first passover, which must have contributed to make him known. But I do not suppose, with your Lordship, that he cleansed the temple at that time, and as we are not informed what the miracles were, we cannot judge of the greatness or notoriety of them.

It will certainly be somewhat favourable to my hypothesis, as well as your Lordship's, that Herod should not have been at Jerusalem at this passover. But, my Lord, the chance of his being

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absent from *seven successive feasts* (when, like every other Jew, he was under obligation to attend them all) or only from *one particular feast*, is much more than seven to one. We know he did attend at that on which our Lord was crucified.

We both suppose that Jesus made disciples in Judea after this passover, and for that time to have made more disciples than John. But I suppose him to have spent only a *few days* there, and not *several months*; and as no particular miracles are mentioned, those disciples might be the effect of John's preaching in those parts, as much as of his own preaching and working miracles.

We both suppose Jesus to have preached and worked miracles in Galilee, Herod's own kingdom. But I leave out at least two of the circuits that your Lordship supposes Jesus to have made thro' all the cities of Galilee; I reduce the term of them from *months* to *days*, and the whole period of this preaching in Galilee from near *two years*, to about *three weeks*. And certainly the probability of Herod's having heard of Jesus will depend much upon the *time* that these transactions took up.

Had Herod been absent, as your Lordship conjectures, on an expedition against Aretas, it would certainly have taken up a few weeks, and would probably have been at this very time of the year, when Jesus was in Galilee, viz. from the passover to Pentecost. But it is very improbable that an expedition against so neighbouring a prince would extend thro' a winter, the territories
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of both being very inconsiderable. This expedition, therefore, might have been very convenient to my hypothesis, but cannot at all serve your Lordship's.

But, in fact, we read of no more than *one* expedition that Herod made against Aretas, and this followed the death of John. For according to Josephus, the Jews thought that his defeat in that expedition was a judgment from God upon him for putting John to death, *Ant. Lib. xviii. Cap. 7.*

This single expedition against Aretas seems to have been the only one in which he ever engaged; and Josephus expressly says, (*Ant. Lib. xviii. Cap. 9.*) that Herod was a great lover of his ease, and that he had no great opinion of the court of Rome; so that it was with difficulty that his wife prevailed upon him to undertake that voyage thither which proved so fatal to him.

Had Herod made a journey to Rome at this time (as your Lordship likewise conjectures might have been the case) it would probably have been noticed by Josephus, who mentions two of his journeys thither. So very circumstantial is Josephus's history of this period, and journeys to Rome, by sovereign princes, were undertaken so very seldom, and then upon such urgent business, of a political nature, that I think we may presume, that Josephus not mentioning this journey, which would have been so very convenient to your Lordship's hypothesis, is a proof that no such journey took place. We read of one journey that Herod made to Rome before the last fa-

tal one. But it was at his return from this journey that he married Herodias. This, therefore, must have preceded his interview with John.

Considering, therefore, that this journey to Rome was prior to Herod's acquaintance with John, and his expedition against Aretas after the death of John, it is almost a certainty that, in all the interval between the imprisonment and the death of John, Herod was in his own dominions. The preparations, however, for this single campaign, which might take place in the autumn of this year, immediately following the death of John, will help my hypothesis, tho' it cannot serve that of your Lordship.

What Josephus says of Philip, Herod's brother, which your Lordship quotes, p. 105, viz, "That he lived wholly in the country tributary to him," is mentioned by the historian as a proof of his moderation, and of his love of ease and quiet, and therefore probably refers to his engaging in no wars, and making no journeys to Rome, as other princes did; but cannot imply that either Herod, or any prince in those times, lived much out of their own countries. Herod, I doubt not, excepting his journeys to Rome, and the expedition against Aretas, neither of which, as I have shewn, could have happened in the interval in question (and this expedition could not carry him far from his own territories, or be of long continuance) lived in general at home, the duties of his station necessarily requiring it,

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as those of the Roman governor required him to be at Jerusalem.

Your Lordship conjectures, p. 100, that Herod might reside chiefly at Peræa. But this was in the near neighbourhood of the very country where your Lordship supposes Christ to have preached publickly for several months, before and after the imprisonment of John.

Your Lordship says, p. 102, that "a short interval, very thick sown with uncommon events, seems more remarkable than a long one, thro' which the same events are dispersed. And when the attendance of multitudes on an eminent person is hardly intermitted, a jealous governor, and his adherents throughout his dominions, are more likely to be alarmed with apprehensions of tumult and sedition."

But your Lordship cannot suppose that our Saviour either resided at any place, or travelled from one place to another, without preaching, working miracles, and consequently drawing multitudes after him. And since John says that "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," if every thing that our Lord did or said should be recorded, we are naturally led to think that he spent the time of his public ministry in a pretty uniform manner, except when the crouds of his hearers occasionally obliged him to withdraw himself from public notice for a few days. This, at least, appears to have been the plan of his conduct, till it was generally known that he assumed the character of the

the Messiah, which was not till some time after the death of John.

We do not find that our Lord ever omitted an opportunity of working any benevolent miracle, though he disappointed the Jews of their *sign from heaven*. Though "he did not do *many* "mighty works" at Nazareth, he, nevertheless, "laid his hands on a few sick persons, and cured them." Probably no more were brought to him. Considering, therefore, that so many more miracles must have been wrought in the interval between the imprisonment and the death of John on your Lordship's hypothesis than upon mine, the notoriety of them must, upon the whole, have been greater. Besides they were all of so extraordinary a nature, that certainly the chance of some of them, at least, reaching the ear of Herod must have been greater, in the space of two years, than in that of three or four weeks.

To what I say of the small size of the country of Judea and Galilee, as favourable to the communication of intelligence, your Lordship says, p. 100, "It is not merely the size of a country, "but the intercourse between the places, that "must be considered, when the question is whether the knowledge of a fact is likely to be propagated throughout it."

But, my Lord, a country so exceedingly populous as, by the account of Josephus, Galilee was, cannot but be favourable to the propagation of intelligence. Its several towns resemble the different parts of one extensive metropolis, each

each of which is almost within the hearing of the next. And as your Lordship acknowledges, the public feasts of the Jews were such a means of communication as no other country in the world was ever possessed of. Now in this very interval between the imprisonment and the death of John, there was not, according to my hypothesis, so much as *one* of these public feasts; whereas, on your Lordship's, there were no less than *seven*. How much more easily then may it be supposed, that the fame of Jesus might not reach Herod on my hypothesis than on that of your Lordship.

To make your hypothesis more consistent with the ignorance of Herod concerning Jesus, your Lordship speaks, p. 109, of our Lord's "lowliness and prudence." But I do not see that this is very consistent with your Lordship's supposition of his cleansing the temple at the first pass-over. But let it be as great as your Lordship pleases, the object of his withdrawing himself from public notice was only to avoid occasional inconveniencies, and was often ineffectual. For we read that the more he enjoined silence on particular persons, the more industriously they published his benevolent miracles in their favour.

Your Lordship observes, p. 113, that "some others, and even many of the Jewish people," as well as Herod, thought that Jesus might be John risen from the dead. But this observation is certainly unfavourable to your Lordship's purpose. For though you say, p. 114, that you "attend to the tenor of the gospel history, and
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“ follow wherever it leads,” and that you are
“ little concerned about the inattention or avo-
“ cations of Herod and his friends, about the
“ strange doubts of caprice, or the strange re-
“ solves of a guilty conscience,” it cannot surely
be a matter of indifference to this question,
that *many* of the Jewish people as well as Herod,
entertained doubts whether Jesus might not be
John risen from the dead.

All these doubters cannot be supposed to have
been absent from their country on expeditions to
Rome, or against Aretas, or to have neglected
their attendance at the public feasts for the space
of near two years. Whereas in a populous country
great numbers may be supposed to have been so
inattentive to what passed in the short interval
that on my hypothesis there was between the im-
prisonment and death of John, in which no pub-
lic feast intervened, as, for a short time, to enter-
tain some doubts about the matter.

Your Lordship speaks of it as a difficulty on
both our schemes, that John did not speak of
Jesus to Herod. But, my Lord, it should be
considered that John had two distinct commis-
sions, tho’ the one was subservient to the other,
viz. the announcing the approach of the Messiah,
and the preaching of repentance. We read of
soldiers and publicans applying to him, to learn
how they should conduct themselves. Now the
application of Herod might be of the same na-
ture, and John might not think it necessary to say
any thing to him more than to them, about the
Messiah;

Messiah; especially as this was sufficiently the subject of his public preaching. Besides, at the beginning of his preaching, John had not seen Jesus, and probably did not know at what distance of time he was to follow him; so that his having seen Jesus might have been after his interview with Herod.

I think it no difficulty on either of our schemes, tho' your Lordship considers it as one, p. 103, that John in his prison should hear of the works of Jesus, tho' Herod did not hear of them in his palace. The disciples of John were much more likely to be attentive to Jesus, than any person belonging to the court of Herod.

SECTION IV.

Of the interpolation of the word passover in John vi. 4.

IN the preceding sections I have chiefly endeavoured to support the arguments for my own hypothesis against the attacks of your Lordship. In those that immediately follow, I shall endeavour to defend myself against your Lordship's arguments,

You are not satisfied with what, it must be acknowledged, the hypothesis I contend for abso-

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lutely requires, viz. the interpolation of the word *παρα* in John vi. 4. because all the present manuscripts have that reading. You add, p. 117, " Shall we then oppose to this the conjecture of " G. J. Vossius, Mr. Mann, Bp. Pearce, and " Dr. Priestley, some of whom have been imper- " ceptibly led to view this matter thro' a me- " dium unfavourable to the discovery of truth."

Bishop Pearce, however, cannot be said to have been of this number; and a liberal and judicious critic, tho' he will not be wanting in a due respect for manuscripts, will not be a slave to them; and it is of itself, independently of any hypothesis concerning the duration of Christ's ministry, exceedingly improbable that the present should have been the original reading. This, however, has been so fully stated already, that I shall not urge it any farther. But as your Lordship gives me a quotation from Vossius on this subject, I shall in return refer your Lordship to the late *Mr. Bowyer's observations* on this text, in which he approves of the omission of the word *παρα*, and adds other things in support of Mr. Mann's hypothesis in general, which I did not know that he was any favourer of before.

Your Lordship says that the *greenness of the grass* at the time to which the events mentioned in this chapter belong, is an argument that it was immediately before a passover, and therefore that the present was probably the true reading. I readily acknowledge that this is a circumstance in your Lordship's favour. But tho' the grass
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in general be burned up in May, in the country of Judea, there might be particular places in the neighbourhood of a fresh water lake where it was not so; and besides I have a resource which your Lordship has not in this case. For I can easily suppose that Mark, who is not known to have been present at the transaction, and who is the only historian that mentions this circumstance, might be mistaken with respect to it.

You add, p. 121, that if we expunge this verse, there will be a want of force in the observation John vii. 1. *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.* Now, besides that I transpose the 5th and 6th chapters, and therefore your Lordship's argument may perhaps not affect me at all, I really do not apprehend wherein the force of this observation lies, as you do not explain it. I must, therefore, wait for your Lordship's next letter before I reply to it. I suppose the feast of Pentecost to have preceded what is related in this 7th chapter, and it was at this feast that the Jews sought to kill Jesus, as we are informed in the fifth chapter, which I make to precede this; and this circumstance is an argument in favour of that transposition.

I had observed that Irenæus cannot be supposed to have had the reading of this *παρὰ* in his copy of John's gospel, because he does not avail himself of it in his answer to the Valentinians. In reply to this, your Lordship says, p. 121, "Irenæus only proposed to mention how often, I 2 " at

“at the season of the passover, our Lord, after his baptism, went up to Jerusalem; and therefore the mention of John vi. 4. was not to his immediate purpose; because this very evangelist informs us that Jesus did not attend that festival.”

But, my Lord, what was the reason for this writer's enumerating the passovers at which our Lord gave his attendance at Jerusalem, but only to shew that there were so many passovers in the course of his ministry. I wish your Lordship would reprove what Irenæus says on this subject, and consider his immediate object. You must then perceive, that our Lord's attendance at the passover is of no consequence at all to his purpose, which was simply (as he was professedly combating the Valentinian opinion at large) to note all the passovers that occurred in the course of our Lord's public ministry. Considering, therefore, how intent he manifestly was to collect all the evidence he could against the opinion of Valentinus, and that he neither in this place, nor any other, makes the least mention of it, it may, I think, be safely presumed that he found no such reading.

Your Lordship cannot deny but that the urging of this passover would have been greatly to his purpose. Why else does your Lordship make so great account of it, in maintaining the same argument? You are sensible that it is the most decisive circumstance that can be urged in the case. Had Mr. Mann admitted this passover, there would

would not have been the least colour for his hypothesis. He could never have entertained the idea of it. Account then, if you can, for the silence of Irenæus with respect to this passover, when it could not but have been of as much use to his argument as to your Lordship's, for they are the very same.

Your Lordship says, that he only enumerates the passovers at which our Lord attended, but why did he not think of enumerating those at which he did *not* attend; when, if he was capable of thinking and writing at all, he could not but see that these would have been just as much to his purpose as the others; because every passover, whether Jesus attended at it or not, adds a year to the duration of his ministry, to extend which was his only and immediate object. I must therefore conclude that, as he has not noted this passover, though he professedly went over the gospel history, and especially that of John, with that view, he found no such reading in his copy, and consequently that the present reading is an interpolation since his time.

The enumeration of the different passovers (though he does not pretend to find any so called by any evangelist besides *two*) is at the very beginning of Lib. ii, Cap. ix. the title of which is *Ostenso quod uno anno non præconcionaverit dominus post baptismum, sed omnem habuisse ætatem*; that is, *to shew that our Lord did not, after his baptism, preach only one year, but employed every age in it.* And therefore, after the enumeration of all the passovers

passovers he proceeds to give reasons why Christ must have preached in every stage of life, even to advanced years (*provehior etas*) which he states as commencing at forty or fifty years. And this age, meaning probably the latter, he asserts, from the testimony of those who conversed with them, that John and the other apostles actually gave to Jesus.

But none of this good man's commentators pay any regard to this account, but consider the whole as proceeding from his excessive zeal to confute the Valentinians. *Candide autem* (says Feuardentius, as quoted by Grabe on the place) *de beatissimo Martyre sentiendum, quod impetu ipso refellendi Gnosticos, qui annum trigessimum primum illum non excessisse dicebant, in partem contrariam delatus est. Sanctissimis enim et doctissimis hoc non raro contigisse, ipsa luce manifestius est.*

That our readers may judge for themselves, I shall translate the whole passage from Irenæus.

“ It is very extraordinary, that they who pretend to have penetrated into the deep things of God, should not have searched the gospels, to find at how many passovers Jesus, after his baptism, went up to Jerusalem, as it is a custom with the Jews to assemble at Jerusalem from all countries every year for this purpose. First he went to this feast of passover after he had changed the water into wine at Cana in Galilee; when, as it is written, *many believed on him, seeing the miracles that he did*, as is related by John the disciple of our Lord.”

“ Then,

“ Then, withdrawing himself, he retired to Samaria, when he held the conversation with the Samaritan woman, and being absent cured, by a word, the son of the Centurion, saying, Go, *thy son liveth.*”

“ After this he went a second time up to Jerusalem at the feast of passover, when he cured the paralytic person who had lain at the pool thirty eight years, bidding him rise and take up his bed. Then, retiring over the sea of Tiberias, and being followed by a great multitude, he fed them with five loaves, so that twelve baskets of fragments remained.”

“ Again, when he had raised Lazarus from the dead, and the Pharisees laid wait for him, he retired to the city of Effrem, and thence coming to Bethany six days before the passover, and going from Bethany to Jerusalem, and there having eaten the passover, the following day he suffered. That these *three* seasons of passover cannot be comprized in *one year* must be acknowledged by every body. And that the month in which the passover is celebrated is the first month, and not the twelfth, they who boast that they know all things might have learned from Moses.”

“ Their interpretation therefore of the *one year*, and of the *twelfth month*, is proved to be false, so that they must either abandon this interpretation, or the gospel. Otherwise, how did our Lord preach only one year.”

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What can be more evident from this, than that our Lord's *attendance* at the passover here mentioned was a circumstance of no moment whatever to this writer's argument; since he only means to shew that there were, at least, *three passovers* in the course of his ministry, and therefore that it must have extended beyond one year.

It must also, I think, be very evident, that if this writer had found any mention of another passover in John vi. 4, he would not have failed to note it. For his hypothesis was not that Christ preached *only two years*, but that he continued preaching to an advanced age.

Grabe's note upon this passage is as follows, "Irenæus is mistaken when he supposed the feast of the Jews mentioned John v. 1. to be a passover. But a little after, in the sixth chapter, which our author also cites, there is, at the fourth verse, express mention of the approach of another Jewish passover, from which the second year of Christ's preaching is clearly collected." In my opinion Irenæus would have been as quick sighted in discovering this passover as Mr. Grabe, being much more interested to do it; and his not noting it is a proof with me that, in his copy of that gospel, and probably in all the copies of his time, there was no such passover mentioned.

Your Lordship says farther, that "another reason for Irenæus's silence may be assigned. He might possibly think that the passover alluded to was that at which Christ suffered."

I acknowledge

I acknowledge that Irenæus has shewn himself capable of supposing very strange things, especially that Christ preached till he was of advanced age; yet I do not think he was capable of taking the passover in John vi. 4. to be that at which Christ suffered, because several other Jewish feasts are distinctly mentioned between this and the last passover. John vii. 2. *Now the Jews feast of tabernacles was at hand.* x. 22. *And it was at Jerusalem, the feast of Dedication, and it was winter.* xi. 55. *And the Jews Passover was nigh at hand.*

This last was evidently that at which our Lord suffered. Could it be supposed, then, that this writer should mention the same passover so long before, as a feast *at hand*, when a feast of Tabernacles, and another of Dedication, intervened (our Lord's attendance at each of which are distinctly mentioned, and his conversation with the Jews at each of them recited) and so long after speak of it again as a feast *at hand*? This is a supposition so very improbable, that I really think even Irenæus incapable of it. I therefore still conclude that Irenæus found no passover mentioned in this place. His want of passovers was such, that he would certainly have caught at it.

I was far from denying, as your Lordship seems to suppose, p. 124, that Eusebius extended the ministry of Christ to three years. I have always considered him as the first known author of that opinion. But this he might think to be consistent with what he also says, that the three first

evangelists record the actions of our Saviour for one year only, viz. after the imprisonment of John the Baptist; since he might think that he preached more than two years before the imprisonment of John. But I say he could not have supposed this, and at the same time have had the reading of *πασχα* in his copy of the text in dispute, or have given that attention to the gospel of John which he seems to have done; because this passover must necessarily fall between the imprisonment of John and the death of Christ.

It must have done so according to the gospel of John himself. For we learn from Matthew and Mark, that Jesus left Judea to go into Galilee on his hearing of the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and John mentions this leaving of Judea, Chap. iv. 3; and it is not till after relating the particulars of this journey, and, as your Lordship supposes, his return to some other feast at Jerusalem, and back again to Galilee, that this other passover is mentioned. This opinion therefore, of Eusebius, viz. that the preaching of Christ after the imprisonment of John was comprized within the space of a year is inconsistent with his having the word *πασχα* in his copy of John vi. 4. It was not therefore till after the time of Eusebius that the interpolation of that word came to be general in the copies of John's gospel.

You say, *Notes* p. 27, that “ the quotation
 “ from Dr. Lardner, in your preface, shews that,
 “ upon re-examination Eusebius, did not over-
 “ look

“look the word *πασχα* in John vi. 4.” The whole passage from Dr. Lardner (*Supplement*, vol. I. p. 444) is as follows “Eusebius says, The other three evangelists have recorded the actions of our Saviour for one year only, after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Jerom speaks to the like purpose, in his book of *illustrious men*; but it should have been said one year and somewhat more, meaning the time and actions of our Lord’s most public ministry. For it seems to me, that the antients supposed our Lord’s ministry to have lasted in the whole somewhat more than two years. Eusebius, indeed, computed our Lord’s ministry to have consisted of three years and a half, and supposed John’s gospel to have in it four passovers. He seems to have been the first Christian who advanced that opinion, and he is now generally followed by harmonizers of the gospels, and by ecclesiastical historians.”

In his *Credibility*, (part 2, vol. 8, p. 138) he says of Eusebius that according to him “our Lord’s ministry was above three years, and not quite four years complete. But his argument there alledged for that opinion, from the number of Jewish high priests; during the period of Christ’s preaching, is absurd, and groundless; as appears from Josephus, though Eusebius endeavours to support his opinion from that Jewish author.”

I must however observe, that it does not appear that Eusebius read *πασχα* in the passage

in question. For though he makes so many passovers in our Lord's ministry, he does not quote this as his authority for any of them; how difficult soever we may imagine it to be to make out so many passovers without *that*. And, as I have observed, his saying that from the imprisonment of John to the last passover was only one year, is plainly inconsistent with his supposing that there was any passover mentioned in that place.

Dr. Lardner says (*Credibility* part 2, vol. 8, p. 316) that "Epiphanius says there were two passovers in our Lord's ministry according to St. John, and that he suffered in the third passover. Therefore he did not think the feast of the Jews mentioned John v. 1, to be a passover." He should rather have said, that "two passovers are mentioned in the beginning of the first part of John's gospel, and that he suffered in a third." And I rather think since Epiphanius makes no mention of the passover in John vi. 4, though it would have been as much to his purpose as to that of Irenæus, and he writes much more largely on the subject, that, like Irenæus, he *did* consider the feast mentioned John v. 1, to be the second passover.

It must be impossible to trace the precise time when any particular interpolation was made, in books of which there were so many copies and translations, as there were of the New Testament; as it would first be inserted in the margin of some one copy, then get into the text of one that was taken

taken from it, and would probably be a long time before it became general.

That this word $\pi\epsilon\sigma\chi\alpha$ in John vi. 4 was subsequent to the time of Irenæus, I think indisputable, and probably too that of Eusebius and Epiphanius; but I find it quoted, as we now have it, by Chrysostom, in his homily on the 7th of John, vol. 7. p. 245, in the edition of Fronto Ducæus and Commelin.

Indeed it is most natural to suppose that this feast would begin to be considered as a passover after it was generally supposed that some passover did intervene before the first, mentioned by John, and the last in which Christ suffered. And though Irenæus considered the feast mentioned John v. 1, to be a passover, Dr. Lardner observes that afterwards it was generally thought to be the Pentecost, after which the suspicion of a passover fell naturally on the feast mentioned John vi. 4.

It should seem that whatever time any of the Antients gave to the duration of our Lord's ministry above one year and a few months, they supposed the whole of it to have preceded the busy part of it related by the three first evangelists, and consequently to have preceded the imprisonment of John the Baptist. And therefore, on whatever other reasons their opinion was supported, it did not require the feast mentioned John vi. 4. to be a passover, nay was inconsistent with it; since as I have observed already this feast must have fallen in the very busiest part of the ministry. In this your Lordship must agree with me,

me, for you make it the *third* passover in our Lord's ministry, and to have happened after the death of John the Baptist, and the return of the twelve from their mission, which is a disposition essentially different from that of the Antients.

SECTION V

Of the transposition of the 5th and 6th chapters of the gospel of John.

YOUR Lordship cannot be reconciled to the transposition of the 5th and 6th chapters of John's gospel, tho' I think it very probable in itself, as well as agreeable to my particular hypothesis. I should even think that the bare reading of the several chapters in the connection proposed (in the manner that Mr. Mann has exhibited them) might be sufficient to satisfy any impartial person.

According to our present copies, the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th chapter connect very ill. For at the end of the former chapter Christ is at Jerusalem, and the next begins with these words, *After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee*, as if he had been somewhere in Galilee immediately before, and had only that sea to cross, which will be the case if we connect the

the end of the 6th chapter with the beginning of the 5th; for he was then at Capernaum, close by the sea of Galilee.

As ill do the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th chapter connect, as they now stand. At the end of the 6th chapter Christ is in Capernaum in Galilee, and in the first verse of the 7th chapter we read *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.* This surely implies that he was in Judea immediately before, as he is at the end of the 5th chapter, which I would connect with the 7th.

If omissions, interpolations, and transpositions, had been things unknown, or very rare, in our present copies of antient writings, there would be some difficulty in admitting this. But we know, my Lord, they are common things, and that the sacred writings are by no means exempt from them, in whatever manner they have happened. I think it very easy to account for them.

But your Lordship says, p. 116, "The antient manner of writing, on skins of parchment, joined together and rolled up, is unfavourable to the idea of transposition in general; and as the division into chapters is of modern date, the particular transposition of one chapter into the place of another carries less plausibility with it."

Now it appears to me that transpositions might much more easily be made by the antients, who wrote only on *one side* of the different skins or parchment

parchment, &c. and afterwards fastened them together, than by the moderns, who write on both sides of the paper. After an antient book was completely written, and put together, it was easy to transpose any part of it, if a different arrangement should have been thought preferable; but the thing is impossible with a modern book.

Though the original copies of the gospels were not divided into chapters, and numbered as they are now, they were necessarily divided into different parts, probably in the form of paragraphs, as other antient books often are. And I think it very propable, that different discourses and transactions in the gospel history were composed at different times by the original writers, and put together afterwards. Indeed, it is hardly possible to write any thing at first exactly as it is intended to go into the world.

Now by some oversight, perhaps in the first putting together of the gospel of John, or by some very early transcriber having, by mistake, begun to write out the subject of the sixth chapter, and chusing to finish it before he went back to the fifth, or in some other way, against which there might be *a priori* many chances, these two chapters might happen to be transposed; and the copy in which this transposition was made might, on other accounts, have acquired such credit, as to be generally followed afterwards. However, an argument from the state of the text itself is a positive proof of a transposition, whether we can satisfy ourselves about the *manner* in which it might

might have happened or not. Here I will say with your Lordship, p. 114, "I attend to the tenor of the gospel history, and follow wherever it leads."

Your Lordship thinks, p. 113, the fifth chapter of John must precede the account of the raising of Jairus's daughter, and of the widow of Nain's son, because "v. 21. and 25. of this chapter contain a prediction that Jesus would shortly raise some from the dead, and thus imply that he had not yet performed a miracle of this kind." The verses I find as follows. *V. 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. V. 20. Verily verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live.* Immediately after which follows v. 26. 27, *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

Now I am so far from seeing this passage in the same light in which your Lordship sees it, that I think it much more natural to suppose that, in the verses I have quoted, our Lord rather alluded to something *already done*, than to something he had never done at all. He seems to be speaking to persons who had heard that he *had* raised some from the dead, and he assures them, that, in like manner as he had raised to life some that had been dead, he would in due time, raise

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all the dead, and also judge them according to their works. This I am inclined to think from *the dead* being mentioned in the plural number, and in general, and from the intimation of the future judgment following this resurrection; whereas the persons that he had raised to life on earth were not raised to an immortal life; and therefore their judgment did not immediately follow their resurrection. I do not, however, deny that our Lord might allude to the raising of others from the dead in his life time, and he might perhaps allude to the case of Lazarus and others not mentioned in the gospels; but what he says by no means implies that he had wrought no miracles of this kind before, and therefore we have here no reason for supposing that the discourse in the fifth chapter preceded the raising of Jairus's daughter, or the widow of Nain's son.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

Of journeys supposed to be omitted in my Harmony.

PROCEEDING with my defence, I find your Lordship charges me with a considerable oversight indeed, nothing less than that of an intire circuit performed by Jesus through Galilee, attended by the twelve apostles. "A second circuit, you say, p. 90, through Galilee followed, in which the Twelve were with Jesus; and of this I think you take no notice, either in your 17th section, or in your calendar."

But so far, my Lord, is this from being the case, that I have recited the particulars of this very journey, for which your Lordship finds no particulars at all. For Luke himself, after mentioning this journey in general, and those who accompanied our Lord in it, particularly the Twelve, and certain women who ministered to him of their substance, proceeds, according to the most natural interpretation of his narrative, to recite some of the particulars; and they are the discourse containing the parable of the sower, the cure of the demoniac at Gadara, the raising of Jairus's daughter, &c. in which, according to the testimony of the other evangelists, he was attended by the twelve apostles. They only refer this part of the gospel history to an earlier period.

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To pretend that the journey was one thing, and the particulars, recited immediately afterwards, another, when the writer himself makes no difference, must be void of all foundation; and to suppose that the parable of the sower was repeated, and that the cure of the demoniac at Gadara, &c. happened twice, merely because Matthew and Mark place them in different parts of their history (and indeed expressly assert that they happened in a different order) would be to load the history with the greatest improbabilities. For it can never be believed that so many things, attended with so many of the same circumstances, ever happened to any man, as must, upon this plan, be believed of Jesus. If your Lordship's idea of the inspiration of the sacred writers obliges you to maintain this, I am truly sorry for it. You ought then to have done as Dr. Macknight has done, maintain that all the evangelists relate every thing in the order in which they happened, and thereby make the whole history absolutely incredible.

In your margin, your Lordship likewise refers me to Matt. ix. 35, and Mark vi. 6, as authorities for the same circuit. But this, my Lord, is evidently a very different journey from that which is mentioned by Luke. And yet it is one that I have not overlooked, for it was that in which Jesus visited Nazareth.

The case seems to have been thus. Our Lord had in a former excursion visited the places in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, probably to the
north

north of that city, and among others Chorazin and Bethsaida, and he was now about to visit the places to the West. But he had not made much progress before he perceived that, travelling in this manner, he could not do sufficient justice to them all; and therefore he sent the twelve to the more distant places, while he confined himself to Nazareth and its neighbourhood. That our readers may judge for themselves how far this account is supported by the evangelists, I shall quote their own words on the occasion.

After the events of the day on which our Lord called Matthew to attend him, this evangelist says, Ch. ix. 35, *Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then says he to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, &c. These twelve Jesus sent forth, &c.*

According to Mark, after the events of the same day at Capernaum, vi. 1. *Jesus went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his disciples followed him. He then arrives at Nazareth, where being rejected, v. 6. he went about the villages teaching. And he called unto him the twelve,*
and

and began to send them forth by two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits, &c.

There are small variations in these accounts, for which reason your Lordship may be disposed to make another journey out of them, and by this means load and embarrass my system more than you have already done. But I shall not think it at all affected by any thing of this kind.

SECTION VII.

Of the number of miles that Jesus has been supposed to travel per day.

IN order to represent the hurry and fatigue, that you suppose I make our Saviour to have been in, on my hypothesis, your Lordship like Mr. Whiston, draws a plan of all his journeys, from the first passover to the next pentecost, and then computes the number of miles he must have travelled per day. But, my Lord, when any scheme is represented, it should be exhibited *in all its parts*, and not mixed with any other scheme. In this case, therefore, the *time* should not be mine, and the *journeys* your Lordship's. And yet this is the manner in which your Lordship has treated me. This makes a mixture of the two schemes, and something agreeable to neither of them. I am
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really not a little surprized that the manifest unfairness of this treatment should not have struck your Lordship. Had I treated your Lordship in the same manner, you would have felt the impropriety of it in a moment.

That we may examine this business with more attention, I must beg your Lordship to turn to p. 93 of your letter, and we will look over the list that your Lordship has there drawn of our Saviour's journeys, and I will point out what articles I admit, and what I object to. I will then allow the rest in your own numbers, that you may not think that I will contend for trifles, and we shall see how the account of his daily progress really stands upon my hypothesis, unmixed with your Lordship's.

No.

Miles.

- | | | |
|---|------|--------------------------|
| 1. "From Jerusalem to Judea | 25." | Granted. |
| 2. "From Judea to Cana - - | 50." | Granted. |
| 3. "From Cana thro' Nazareth
to Capernaum" - - | 30." | Granted
in part only. |

Because I do not suppose Jesus to have passed thro' Nazareth; and for this, according to your Lordship's map, I ought to deduct more than I do, when I allow 20 miles.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------------|
| 4. "The circuit about Galilee | 70." | Granted
in part. |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------------|

I deduct from this article at least two thirds, because I confine the circuit to the places in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, chiefly to the north of that town. I therefore call it 30 miles.

5. "From

5. "From Capernaum to Jeru-^{Miles.} 65." } Not granted.
salem - - - - -

With this journey I have nothing at all to do, and I wonder your Lordship should not have put to my account the journey back again as well as the journey thither, as one of them could not have been made without the other.

6. "From Capernaum to Nain 20." Granted.

7. "To Chorazin and Bethsaida" } 5." Not granted.

This I do not admit, because I suppose the visit to those places to be included in No. 4.

8. "The second circuit about } 70." Not granted.
Galilee" - - - - -

See the reasons in the last section.

9. "Crossing the lake in a ship } 12." Granted.
to Gadara, and back to Capernaum

10. "To Nazareth - - - - - 20." Granted.

11. "Teaching and preaching } 33." Granted
in the cities of Galilee } in part.

This journey I confine to the neighbourhood of Nazareth, and therefore shall not allow much more than half the number of miles, or 20.

If your Lordship will now please to cast up the number of miles as I have corrected them, you will find the whole amount to be 197, instead of 400, that is, not quite half as much travelling. And dividing this number by 50, you will find that there is no occasion, on my hypothesis, to suppose our Lord to have travelled quite four miles per day; and where is the great improbability in this. Few men of an active life, I believe, walk less,

less, and many persons walk three or four times as much the whole year through.

It is, besides, by no means certain, though it seems to be generally taken for granted, that our Saviour always travelled on foot. Luke informs us, Ch. viii. 2, that in one of his progresses thro' Galilee (and it was probably the same in most of the others) he was attended by "Mary Magdalene, " and other women, who ministered to him of " their substance." Now these women cannot be supposed to have travelled on foot, and would they suffer the person on whom they attended, and whose expences they defrayed, to do so, at least always; though this might be the case in little excursions from any more considerable place, to the neighbouring villages, where the women might not always attend him?

This, I own, is conjecture. But if our Lord was attended by *rich women* at all, I cannot think the supposition, of his not travelling always on foot, to be wholly without probability. The twelve apostles also do not, by any means, appear to have been poor, or unable to provide mules for themselves. Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew, it is pretty certain, had some property, and none of the apostles were in the capacity of servants, or in the lowest classes of life.

SECTION VIII.

Of references to more than two passovers in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

I Must now attend to another of your Lordship's arguments for extending the time of our Lord's ministry, beyond the year and a few months that Mr. Mann assigns to it. It is indication of *other passovers* intervening between the two that are allowed to be expressly mentioned by John. Every additional passover undoubtedly adds a year to the duration of our Lord's ministry, but your Lordship must allow me to require sufficient evidence for such passovers.

You say, p. 139, that "all the evangelists, though they do not expressly mention any passover to have intervened between the imprisonment of John and the death of Christ, imply one when they mention the plucking the ears of corn."

But this event I place before the pentecost after the first passover, the most proper time of the year for that transaction. It is only the long stay that your Lordship makes in Judea that obliges you to defer it till after another passover.

"St. Luke," you say, p. 139, "refers to some national festival between the second and third passover:" when he says, Ch. xiii. 1. *There were present some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had*

had mingled with their sacrifices. But it is by no means certain that this event happened during the course of our Lord's ministry. It might not be at a public festival, or that festival might not be a passover.

"There is also," your Lordship says, p. 139, "another implication of the paschal season when St. Mark says, Ch. vi. 39, that the five thousand, when they were miraculously fed by Jesus, sat down on the green grass." This I think I have sufficiently accounted for before.

"St. Luke," your Lordship says, p. 139, "alludes to one or two of our Lord's journeys to Jerusalem besides his last. Ch. x. 38." *Now it came to pass as they went, that he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house. And also xvii. 11. And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.* With respect to these journeys, I can only say that they appear to me to be the same, viz. that which preceded the last passover, though there is evidently a good deal of confusion in this part of Luke's history. The former is not said to be any journey to Jerusalem at all, or it might be at some other public feast, and not a passover.

"St. Luke," your Lordship says, p. 140, "records a reference to his preaching in Judea and Jerusalem, Ch. xxiii. 5." *And they were more fierce, saying, he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, to this place.* Now it is not denied, but supposed by me,

that all the latter part of our Lord's ministry was employed in Judea, after he had spent the first part of it in Galilee.

You say, p. 140, that "both Luke and Matthew suppose our Lord to have been often at Jerusalem," referring to Luke xiii. 34, and Matt. xxiii. 37. The passage from Luke is, *Oh Jerusalem Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.* The passage from Matthew is to the same purpose, and almost in the same words. To this I think it sufficient to reply, that, in my opinion, the preaching of Jesus in Jerusalem at four public feasts, and in Judea all the last half year of his ministry, abundantly justifies the language.

"The astonishment and fear of the twelve, described by Mark, Ch. x. 32." your Lordship says, "imply that Jesus had before incurred danger at Jerusalem." The passage is. *And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid.*

Now this *amazement* seems to me to have been occasioned by the idea of the difficulty our Lord had just before expressed, of rich men getting into the kingdom of heaven, when to be rich and great was their original view in following Jesus. And their *fear* might have been occasioned by the intimation our Lord had just given them of the persecutions

persecutions they were to expect in his service. Nothing is there said of any danger to Jesus himself in particular. However, it is well known that Jesus had been in danger at Jerusalem, and his disciples expressly referred to it, when they would have dissuaded him from going to see Lazarus.

In the last place your Lordship says, p. 140, that "our Lord's words, *from the days of John the Baptist until now*, Matt. xi. 12." are better suited to the opinion "that the Baptist's imprisonment had taken place eight or ten months before, than about four weeks."

I answer, that they would have suited better still if the interval had been eight or ten years; but better, as I suppose it, to have been four weeks, than four days. But, my Lord, *from the days of John the Baptist*, certainly means the *beginning* of his preaching, which I suppose to have been seven or eight months before this discourse of our Lord's.

After reciting these and other arguments, by your Lordship's own confession still weaker than these, and on which therefore I do not animadvert, you very properly add, p. 144, "Still I believe that the sagacity of critics would have been fruitlessly employed, but for John's supplemental history." Much, indeed, my Lord, are the favourers of your Lordship's hypothesis indebted to that one word *πασχα* in the sixth chapter of that gospel. It is the corner stone of the whole system. But it seems now to be so much loosened by the repeated pushing of several able critics,

critics, that I cannot help thinking it will soon be forced out of the place it has so long occupied; when all that has been so long and so laboriously built upon it will fall to the ground.

There are arguments of a different complexion derived from the gospel history, favourable, as your Lordship thinks, to the supposition of our Lord's ministry having continued more than a year and a few months; but I think I need not reply to them, as you say, p. 143, you "mention them merely that you might somewhere take notice of all the marks of time respecting the length of our Lord's ministry, or *supposed* to respect it." I shall however just repeat them after your Lordship, that they may have an opportunity of making what impression they can upon our readers. They are the following. The parable of the fig-tree, that was barren three years; Luke xiii. 6: our Lord's saying *I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected*, Luke xiii. 32: Herod having desired to see Jesus *of a long season*, Luke xxiii. 8: our Lord's saying to Philip, John xiv. 9, *Have I been so long time with you?* and lastly his saying to his disciples, Matt. xv. 16, *Are ye also yet without understanding*. I can freely say of such arguments as these, *Valeant quantum valere possunt*.

SECTION

SECTION IX.

Of the argument for the probable duration of our Saviour's ministry from the object of it.

THIS topic, my Lord, is, in its own nature, a very vague one. For, leaving *facts*, we are too much at liberty to *conjecture* what we please, and therefore judge variously. On this account I had intended not to have troubled your Lordship, or our readers, with any thing farther on this subject, but to leave what we have both advanced to make what impression it will. But there are some observations of your Lordship on this subject, in reply to others of mine, that I think you will expect that I should take some notice of.

I shall first make one general remark, which is, that your Lordship and myself, biassed perhaps by our different hypotheses, are apt to attend to different things, your Lordship more especially to what you suppose our Lord had *to do*, and I to what he actually *did*. Your Lordship, for instance, considers the business of instructing the twelve apostles, p. 170, as requiring a long space of time; whereas I attend more to what they actually learned; and finding it to be very little, suppose it to have required but little time. And your Lordship must acknowledge that their full instructions were not given before the descent of the

the Spirit, after our Lord's ascension. After his death and resurrection, they were as full as ever of their ideas of a temporal kingdom. They had acquired, indeed, a rooted affection and veneration for him, on account of the perfect innocence and great excellence of his character, a conviction that he was a teacher sent from God, and the Messiah, and consequently a thorough persuasion that he was incapable of deceiving them. But surely a year's intimacy was sufficient for these purposes.

Your Lordship speaks, p. 169, of "a long series of prophecies having preceded our Lord's coming, and that every former dispensation had a manifest subserviency to his." But I consider the gospel dispensation as only *opened* by Christ himself, and therefore that those prophecies equally respect all that was done by the apostles, and indeed what is doing to this day.

Your Lordship says, p. 172, that on my hypothesis "it might have been objected in all ages, that our Lord's miracles and doctrines had not been subjected to due scrutiny." I answer, that this might have had some weight if no more miracles had been wrought in defence of christianity, besides those that were wrought by Christ himself; but it has no weight at all when it is considered, that the power of working miracles did not cease with our Lord, but continued in equal if not greater vigour with the apostles, and others to whom they communicated spiritual gifts. Our Saviour himself says, John xiv. 12, that

that they should do *greater things than he had done*. Accordingly, our Saviour's miracles did not exceed those of the apostles in magnitude, and they certainly fell far short of them in number; and the latter continued through the whole apostolical age, so that all the effect that the best attested miracles could have, was produced.

On one occasion your Lordship seems to write as if you thought that even fewer miracles than our Saviour himself wrought might have been sufficient. For, after reciting the particulars of what you suppose him to have done in one year only, and that into which you throw the least business you say, p. 166, "This is the substance of all that is recorded between the first and second passover; and I think it amounts to a very full promulgation of the gospel, and affords a very satisfactory proof of its divine origin."

As it has a near connection with this subject, I shall here introduce what your Lordship says of the time that our Lord must have spent at Chorazin and Bethsaida, in order to justify the vehemence of his denunciations against those cities. "From our Lord's mention of Chorazin," p. 94, "and Bethsaida, as the scene of most of his mighty works, and of such as would have convinced Tyre and Sydon, I conclude that they had repeated, as well as ample means of conviction."

"There is only one miracle recorded as wrought near Bethsaida, and whoever has attended to our Lord's manner will discover traces in this relation, that the inhabitants of

“that place were deemed by him unworthy of
“his farther interposition to convert them.”

“I think that Jesus often visited these places
“from Capernaum, and that he both taught in
“their synagogues, and wrought miracles in
“their streets. Cities twice mentioned with Ca-
“pernaum seem to have enjoyed like means of
“reformation with that favoured city; and the
“adopters of an hypothesis shew themselves em-
“barrassed, who must almost necessarily recur
“to a single miracle publickly performed, or to
“as much as was transacted at Capernaum in the
“evening of a single day, as sufficient grounds
“for such awful declarations concerning the im-
“penitence and punishment of these cities.”

Now, my Lord, if I may be allowed to judge for myself, I feel no embarrassment at all in this case. On the contrary, I think your Lordship will find yourself not a little embarrassed in shewing that even Capernaum itself, that *favoured city*, as you call it, enjoyed any more advantage than I suppose our Lord had, at least time enough, upon my plan, to allow both to Chorazin and Bethsaida. For all that we know of his performing there was the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue, with the other transactions of that particular sabbath; his healing the centurion's servant on his return from his first excursion, the cure of the paralytic person, and the raising of Jairus's daughter, with the other events of the day on which he called Matthew, and the discourse in the synagogue, related in the 6th chapter of John.

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Your Lordship may *suppose* much more than this to have been done, but (this is) all that is *related*; and, for my own part, I see no reason for supposing any more. Your Lordship may speak as slightly as you please of *a single miracle publicly performed*, but certainly if the circumstances were such as to leave no doubt but that it was a *real miracle*, it must have been sufficient to have answered all the proper purposes of miracles; and any thing farther, of that kind, must have been superfluous. What could it have signified to work repeated miracles before those that ascribed all our Lord's miracles to the power of Beelzebub?

As to *moral instructions*, the delivering of them cannot be said to have been our Lord's particular business. He certainly neglected no proper opportunity of giving useful lessons to the people, and especially of correcting the abuses which the scribes and pharisees had introduced into the interpretation of the Law. But it ought not to be forgotten by us, that our Lord's proper business (if we may be allowed to form a judgment concerning it from the tenor of the gospel history) was to exhibit sufficient proofs that he was a teacher sent from God, and the promised Messiah, and especially by his resurrection from the dead.

Every thing else, such as the practical use of this, was the business of the ordinary preachers of the gospel. And, if we suppose our Lord's proper business, that is such as no other person

with propriety do, to have been any thing more than this (for which one year was abundantly sufficient) three years, or thirty years, would not have sufficed. Nay he must have preached in person to the end of the world.

SECTION X.

Of the transactions at the first Passover.

HAVING considered every thing of a more general nature relating to the duration of our Lord's ministry, I am now ready to attend to what your Lordship has observed relating to some more particular incidents in our Saviour's history; especially what you suppose to have passed at Jerusalem during the first passover, in Judea afterwards, and then in Galilee.

Your Lordship objects to my supposing that our Lord did not stay at Jerusalem during the whole eight days of the feast of passover; p. 19; observing very justly from Grotius, that it was usual with devout Jews to continue there during the whole of the feast. This, however, your Lordship, who supposes our Saviour to have been absent from Jerusalem many entire feasts, cannot say was absolutely necessary; the evangelist does not say that
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he attended the whole feast, and the same writer expressly says, that he did not go up to another of the feasts, till the middle of it.

But your Lordship asserts, p. 17, that at this particular time Jesus did not leave Jerusalem before the expiration of the eight days of the feast.

“My reasons,” your Lordship says, “for this assertion are, because our Lord wrought miracles during the feast; because he did not then trust himself to the many who believed in him, and because at that time a Jewish ruler, visited him by night, and referred to his miracles, as sufficient to prove him a teacher sent from God.”

But, as your Lordship acknowledges, part of this business, viz. the preaching, working miracles, and consequently gaining disciples, might have been done *before the feast*, and a very short time will suffice for the rest. I am sensible, however, that the antecedent probability is that, like other pious Jews, he would continue at Jerusalem the whole eight days of the feast. But since, as your Lordship acknowledges, this was not absolutely necessary, where can be the great improbability of his leaving Jerusalem about the middle of this first feast, when he might have found himself exposed to so much notice from the miracles he had wrought, as might be inconvenient to him, especially at the opening of his ministry.

“Another probable argument,” your Lordship says, p. 19, “for the continuance of Jesus at Jerusalem all the time of the Passover is this, that it seems suitable to his wisdom and goodness, as

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"a heavenly messenger." But, then, why did he not attend all the feasts, and every day belonging to them? Your Lordship, however, refers to the propriety of his intimating his commission at this first passover. "At this feast," you say, p. 19, "our Lord gave a plain intimation of his Messiahship, by calling the temple his Father's house." You add, "the bolder his action of purging the temple was, the greater is the praise of his fortitude." But then, the less must have been his prudence, which, according to the whole tenor of his conduct, was equally distinguished, especially at the opening of his ministry.

It is, I think, extremely improbable that our Lord should chuse to give any such plain intimation of his being the Messiah so early; though he did there things from which, assisted by the testimony John, they might have *inferred* that he must be the Messiah. It is said indeed, John ii. 23. that *many believed on him, when they saw the miracles which he did.* But it is not said that they believed him to be the *Messiah*, but only, in general, a *teacher sent from God.* This is all that Nicodemus intimates, John iii. 2. *We know that thou art a teacher come from God, because no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.* And what our Lord says of his pretensions to this Jewish ruler is very obscure and reserved.

We deceive ourselves, and are apt to be misled in the interpretation of the gospel history, by not sufficiently considering what kind of a Messiah the Jews expected. Now our Saviour, notwithstanding

standing his working miracles, was a person so exceedingly unlike him that they expected, that it was not at all probable that they would soon suppose him to be the Messiah. It does not appear that even John the Baptist ever expressly called him the Messiah. He only spoke of him as one greatly his superior, and who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Our Lord himself appears to have been remarkably cautious on this subject. Indeed, there is no evidence of his giving any *plain intimation* that he was the Messiah till much later in his ministry; and the first open declaration he made of it was to the apostles only, accompanied with an express charge, that they should not make it known. It is indeed remarkable that he expressly told the woman of Samaria, John iv. 26. that he was the Messiah, and consequently, we may suppose all the people of Sychar. But from a town in Samaria it was not likely to spread, and gain much credit among the Jews.

Is this conduct, my Lord, consistent with his having given a *plain intimation* of his Messiahship to all the Jews so early, and so openly as at the first Passover, or, as your Lordship expresses it, p. 45, with his having *publicly declared his office at the first passover*.

Your Lordship, in giving reasons why you suppose our Lord wrought no miracles in Judea (tho' I can see no reason why he should not, after having wrought many in Jerusalem immediately before),

before) in order to account for the three first evangelists not noticing this period of our Lord's preaching, says, p. 49, that "tho' the Jews had
 "no prejudices about the forerunner of their
 "Messiah; the true Messiah, of humble birth
 "and station, the erector of a spiritual kingdom
 "in the hearts of men, could not have run his
 "destined course without the highest degree of
 "prudence."

Now, my Lord, I do not see the perfect consistence of his publicly declaring himself to be the Messiah at the Passover, which must have been the extreme of *boldness* (I should think of indiscretion) and his passing immediately after to such an extreme of *caution*, as to preach during his long stay in Judea without working any miracles; a thing very unusual, to say the least, with our Lord, whenever an opportunity offered. Indeed, my Lord, the methods you take to make this long stay and preaching of Jesus in Judea pass unnoticed by the three first evangelists, is not, I think, sufficiently consistent with what you suppose to have been transacted at the passover immediately preceding; and it satisfies me that his preaching in Judea could not have taken so much time as your Lordship imagines.

Your Lordship conjectures, p. 17, that "the
 "miracles wrought at Jerusalem during the first
 "Passover were of that most benevolent concilia-
 "ting kind, which consisted in removing human
 "sicknesses and infirmities," which I think very
 probable.

probable. But were not these of a very different nature from his violent cleansing of the temple? How is this consistent with what your Lordship says, p. 40, of "his not chusing, during his continuance in Judea, to attract general notice, and to gather multitudes about him." The buying and selling in the outer court of the temple, for the convenience of those who came to sacrifice, was probably an immemorial custom, and had the sanction of the scribes and pharisees; and therefore could not have been interrupted, in so violent a manner as that in which our Saviour did it, with *a whip*, and *overturning of the tables and seats*, &c. without setting all the then subsisting authority at defiance. Mr. Mann therefore thinks that this cleansing of the temple (which none of the evangelists says was done more than once) was done by our Lord only at the last passover, immediately after his entering the city in triumph, and with such a popularity as no power of the Jewish rulers could oppose.

Your Lordship insists upon it, that this remarkable action was performed at the first passover, as well as at the last; and you think, p. 24, that you can observe some difference between the first cleansing mentioned by John, and the second, of which there is an account in the other evangelists; because on the former occasion the Jews only say, *What sign shewest thou seeing thou doest these things*, and on the latter occasion they sought how they might destroy him.

O

Now

Now, considering that our Lord, at the time that I lay the scene for this transaction, entered Jerusalem with a crowd of attendants, singing *Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* (i. e. the Messiah) it may easily be conceived that the pharisees and high priests durst not openly oppose him; so that, tho' they considered him as assuming a high tone of authority, they did not venture, at that time, any farther than to ask him by what authority he acted. But how is this inconsistent with their privately resolving, from that moment, to cut him off? In all other respects, the transaction, as described by all the evangelists, is the very same; and I cannot help thinking the scene of it to be, on many accounts, more properly laid at the last, than at the first passover.

Besides, if our Lord had acted with this authority at the first passover, he would have been under a kind of necessity of enforcing his orders every time that he had gone to Jerusalem; and if it had been repeated with proper effect, as we may be well assured it would have been, if it had been done by our Lord at all, the custom would have been discontinued, and it would not have been to do again at the last passover. At least, if the Jews had ventured to resume the custom, we might expect some reference to former injunctions, and to a similar conduct of his own, the next time that our Lord acted the same part over again. But all the evangelists relate the transactions

tion without giving the least intimation that it had ever been done before.

Some commentators have given so little attention to the nature of this remarkable transaction, as to imagine that our Lord performed it both on the evening of the day in which he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and again the next morning; because Matthew says it happened on one of the days, and Mark on the other. But is it not more probable that one of these historians, and especially Mark, might be mistaken with respect to the particular day, than that the same persons who quietly submitted to a violent expulsion in the evening, should have so far recovered themselves as to have replaced their seats, &c. and have resumed their business early the next morning, the populace at the same time favouring our Lord, and his authority?

SECTION XI.

Of the stay that Jesus made in Judea after the first passover,

ON the subject of this section I do not intend to trouble your Lordship long. You do not pretend, p. 26, that my distribution of the events relating to our Saviour's tarrying in Judea before his journey to Galilee is *physically impossible*, and the *probability* of it must be determined by an attention to all the circumstances.

The circumstance on which I laid the principal stress, in urging the shortness of that stay, was the total silence of the three first evangelists respecting it, and their uniformly representing the preaching of the gospel as having *begun in Galilee*, and afterwards to have extended to Judea. I therefore said, "the thing was not so considerable
 " as to have been even noticed by any other
 " evangelist than John, though it was prior to
 " any thing that they (the other evangelists)
 " have related of the ministry of Jesus, when it
 " was least likely to have escaped their notice,
 " if it had been at all considerable."

Remarking on this passage, your Lordship says, p. 41, "Apply this mode of arguing to the earliest testimonies which the Baptist gave Jesus, to
 " the miracle at Cana, and particularly to Jesus's
 " attendance

“ attendance and miracles at the first passover,
“ and then judge of its conclusiveness.”

I answer, that I am very willing to apply this mode of reasoning as your Lordship directs, and to the same particulars. The earliest testimonies which the Baptist gave to Jesus are recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What your Lordship here refers to in the Margin, viz. John i. 26, 27, 28, I find in your Lordship's own Harmony placed after them, just as they are in my own Harmony. I therefore do not see the propriety of the instance at all. It is no case of any thing considerable omitted by the three first evangelists, before their account of our Saviour's preaching in Galilee.

The miracle at Cana, of turning water into wine, besides being of a private nature, known only at first to the servants of a single family, does not appear to have been accompanied with any preaching; so that the use of it, as a confirmation of our Lord's mission, was not very apparent. And as to the miracles performed at Jerusalem, till we know what they were, it is impossible to know whether they were considerable or not, or whether they were accompanied with preaching.

The preaching in Judea, subsequent to this, your Lordship supposes not to have been accompanied with miracles; and by this you seem to allow all that I contend for, viz. that our Lord did nothing so considerable there as to be heard of at a distance, in Galilee for instance, where the apostles then resided, in their several private capacities; so that, to every great purpose,
and

and even according to your own account, our Lord may, with propriety enough, be said to have *opened his commission in form*, i. e. attended with its proper testimonials, and evidence, in Galilee, where Matthew says that he *began to preach*, and where the gospel is always said to have *originated*.

I had observed that the great fame of Jesus in Galilee seems to have been occasioned by the miracles he wrought after his appearance in that country. And if, as your Lordship says, p. 39, “it be doubtful whether our Lord wrought any miracles during this stay of his in Judea,” nothing that he did there could have greatly contributed to it. The people of Galilee are represented, John iv. 45, as having heard what Jesus had done *at the feast only*, and not any thing subsequent to it.

The expression your Lordship quotes from Luke iv. 31, as a proof that his great fame in Galilee was occasioned by what he did in Judea, appears to me easily to admit of a contrary interpretation, and to refer to the fame he acquired *after* his arrival there. The words of this evangelist are as follows: *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about; and he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.* Here his great fame is evidently subsequent to the mention of his arrival in Galilee, and therefore was probably occasioned by something done by him *in* Galilee, particularly by his preaching in their

their synagogues ; which was the scene of his first cure of a demoniac, and was at Capernaum.

There is another argument against this long stay of our Lord in Judea, which, though I do not think decisive, I think deserving of your Lordship's consideration.

Jesus says to the apostles, John xv. 27, *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning* ; the most natural interpretation of which is, that they had attended him, not perhaps as *apostles*, but as *disciples* from the commencement of his public ministry, and that they had continued with him ever since. This is perfectly agreeable to my idea of our Lord's not having properly begun to preach till he came to Capernaum, from which time it is probable enough that all the twelve, except perhaps Matthew, attended him constantly, and probably Matthew himself occasionally (as he lived at Capernaum, especially when he delivered the sermon on the Mount, of which he gives so large a detail) though they were not separated from the rest of the disciples till some time afterwards ; whereas your Lordship makes our Saviour to have preached publickly some months in Judea, also in a leisurely journey through Samaria, and at Cana, and to have preached and been rejected at Nazareth before he reached Capernaum, that is, before the call of Peter and Andrew, James and John to a constant attendance upon him. And according to the plan of your Lordship's harmony, the apostles were not separated from the rest of the

the disciples till more than a whole year after the commencement of his ministry. The wisdom of this conduct is certainly not very apparent.

SECTION XII.

Of the journey from Judea to Galilee.

ON this subject your Lordship's disposition to *extend*, and mine to *shorten*, are sufficiently apparent. The whole journey was about *three* days according to our Lord's own way of travelling, and I give *six* days to it, allowing for a stay of part of two days at Sychar, and other unknown interruptions. Whether there be any thing in this to clog my scheme, I leave to the impartial to judge. Your Lordship, however, as usual, disputes every inch of this ground with me, and first with respect to the distance being a journey of three days.

"When you assert that the whole journey," your Lordship says, p. 60, "from Jerusalem to Galilee was but of three days, according to our Lord's own mode of travelling, I suppose that you have in view John ii. 1. But here it is probable that Jesus set out from Bethabara, and not from Jerusalem, which affects the distance to Cana one half; and the words may mean on the third day after Jesus's arrival, or on the third day of the marriage feast."

Now

Now, when I supposed that Jesus might take three days to travel from Judea to Galilee, I al- luded not to John ii. 1. but to Luke xiii. 33. where we find that Jesus, being in Galilee, says he must travel three days before he could reach Jerusalem, or rather that he could not reach Jeru- salem till the third day from the time that he was speaking; *I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*

With respect to the passage in John, your Lordship says, p. 60, that "Jesus probably set out " from Bethabara," which might be the case. But in the latter case he was actually in Galilee, though it is not said where; so that the distance must be reckoned from thence to Jerusalem. Nor, my Lord, is the distance so great, but that persons used to walking might very well perform the journey in the time our saviour mentions. For from Jerusalem to Capernaum, situated at the northermost part of the sea of Galilee, does not seem to have been more than 60 or 70 miles, that is, little more than twenty miles per day.

Your Lordship says, p. 60, that "this jour- " ney from Judea to Galilee was about equal to " that from the neighbourhood of Capernaum to " the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, for which I allow " a fortnight or three weeks, and less than that " from the neighbourhood of Bethsaida to the " town of Cæsarea Philippi, for which I allow a " fortnight."

P

But,

But, my Lord, I did not suppose that the three weeks, or the fortnight, in these cases, were wholly spent in *travelling* only; for then it would have been a sauntering business indeed, but in preaching, in a country which Jesus had never visited before, and did not intend to visit again; and for this purpose he probably made many deviations from the direct road. Whereas, in his journey from Judea to Galilee, it does not appear that he stopped at any place besides Sychar, and, as I observed, he might set out from Bethabara, which, as your Lordship observes, is about half way to Galilee. For, after leaving Jerusalem to go probably to the neighbourhood of Jordan, he would naturally recede farther and farther from the capital; so that his journey to Sychar might not be more than half a day, arriving there, as he probably did, the first day about noon.

To enlarge our Saviour's business on this journey, your Lordship speaks, p. 62, of his "teaching" and converting the Samaritans during two days, "and of his preaching the gospel of the kingdom" as he journeyed." But, my Lord, nothing of this is related in the history. Our Lord does not appear to have had the least intercourse with any Samaritans, except those of Sychar; and nothing is said of his preaching to Jews till he came to Capernaum, according to my plan of the events, or to Nazareth, according to your Lordship's.

Mark, in Ch. i. 14, to which your Lordship refers, only says that *Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*. But this expression

pression would be justifiable, though he did not stop to preach as he travelled at all, but only on his arrival in Galilee; and this I really think was the meaning of the evangelist.

Our Lord, indeed, cured a Nobleman's son of Capernaum, while he was at Cana; but nothing is said of his *preaching* there, any more than when he turned the water into wine, at the same place. I do not say that he did not preach, but that nothing is *said* of his preaching; and he might chuse to work that miracle, in order to raise the expectation of the people of that country concerning him, without giving them any farther satisfaction. And till long after this time, our Lord's preaching seems only to have been similar to that of John, the purport of which was, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The generality of his discourses, as they were only occasional, seem not to have been of great length.

Your Lordship speaks, p. 63, of some stay that our Lord made at Cana, and, you suppose it to have been *four days*; but nothing is said by the evangelist of *any* stay, or of any preaching that would require a stay. I therefore conclude that, excepting his stay at Sychar, which there is no reason to suppose was more than one whole day, our Lord kept travelling on till he arrived at Capernaum.

As to the time of our Lord's stay at Sychar, I said, that, tho' it is called *two days*, it might not, according to the Jewish phraseology, mean more than *part of two days*, so that he might leave the

place *on the second day*. This you do not deny; but you say, that "it appears from Matt. xvii. 1, " compared with Luke ix. 28, that the words may " also signify two complete days."

What these two historians speak of is the interval between the time of a particular discourse of our Lord's, and his transfiguration; which Luke says was *about eight days after*, and Matthew *after six days*. But in this your Lordship supposes what I do not, viz. that these two writers were equally well informed with respect to that interval, and had the same idea of it; whereas it appears to me that Luke, who was not present, was not quite certain about it, and therefore he says it was *about eight days after*; but Matthew, who was present, says, positively that it was *after six days*, or, as I interpret it, *on the sixth day* from the time of the discourse.

SECTION

SECTION XIII.

Whether Jesus visited Capernaum or Nazareth first.

YOUR Lordship says, p. 73, that you “ contend
“ for it, that the visit to Nazareth followed
“ that to Cana,” meaning that it preceded the
visit to Capernaum; and, in reply to what I had
advanced on the subject, you say, p. 76, “ St.
“ Luke directly asserts the fact, and I believe
“ him.”

But, my Lord, Matthew is just as express in
asserting the contrary. He says, Ch. iv. 17, that
after his arrival at Capernaum, *Jesus began to
preach*; and he does not speak of his rejection
at Nazareth till long after, viz. Ch. xiii. 53. And
that this was the same rejection with that of which
Luke speaks, is as evident as a thing of this nature
can well be; because they are attended with several
of the same circumstances. In both the people are
offended at the meanness of his parentage, and in
both he replies that a prophet is not esteemed in
his own country. Matthew says expressly, that
he did not many mighty works there, and Luke
does not mention any.

Mark is as express in placing the visit to Na-
zareth, and his rejection there, attended also with
the same remarkable circumstances, long after his
preaching at Capernaum, in ch. vi. 1. Now as
all these evangelists are equally express, is not
the testimony of two preferable to that of one,
and

and that one the least likely to be exactly informed of the fact?

As to the two visits to Nazareth, which your Lordship supposes, and two rejections there, I must say that I see no evidence whatever for it. For it can never be probable that two visits to the same place should have been attended with the same circumstances. Even Epiphanius, who makes so many visits to Nazareth, supposes only one rejection there.

All the difference your Lordship pretends to find between the two supposed journeys, p. 70, is that in the first, mentioned by Luke, you say "it seems probable that Jesus wrought no miracle;" whereas on the second, mentioned by Matthew and Mark, *he did not many mighty works there, only laying his hands on a few sick persons, and healing them.* But, my Lord, Luke does not say expressly, that he wrought no miracle at all. You can only infer from his account, that he did nothing so extraordinary as he had done at Capernaum, which is not inconsistent with his curing a few sick persons, which Mark evidently speaks of as a thing that was inconsiderable.

If, my Lord, a variation so very trifling as this will authorize us to suppose a repetition of any transaction in the gospel history, I will venture to say, there is no incident in the whole compass of it that must not be doubled, if it has been related by two evangelists, and tripled if related by three. No history can bear to be treated in this manner, and retain its credibility. It has been

been in this way, viz. by contending for the most minute agreement in the different accounts of the same thing, that much injury has been done to the evidence of christianity already.

I am, if possible, still less satisfied with your Lordship's reply to my principal argument for the visit to Capernaum preceding that to Nazareth, viz. from the reference to miracles performed at Capernaum while our Lord was at Nazareth in Luke iv. 23. *Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country*, which I think clearly implies, that he had wrought many extraordinary miracles there.

To this your Lordship says, " This is a difficulty which well deserves our attention, as christian critics. I have (in the notes to the Harmony) thus endeavoured to obviate it. *ὅσα* may solely refer to the miracle recorded John iv. 46. and the scene of which was at Capernaum, as *ὅσα*, Luke viii. 39, refers only to a single transaction. I add, and as *τῶν*, John v. 20, refers only to the healing of the man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years."

How this solution of the difficulty may strike other persons I cannot tell. To me it seems very unnatural. A single miracle, the scene of which was at Capernaum, when Jesus himself had not been there, applies but very imperfectly, to say the best, to things that he had done in Capernaum. In these circumstances, I should rather expect that the reference would have been to the things he had done in Jerusalem, or Judea.

Besides,

Besides, Luke does not assert it as a point of chronology, of which he had taken pains to be particularly well informed, that the visit to Nazareth preceded that to Capernaum. He only says that, *passing thro' the midst of them* (the people of Nazareth) *he went his way, and came down to Capernaum*. And Matthew and Mark, as I observed before, are equally express in noting a great number of events, which they relate as taking place between the visit to Capernaum and that to Nazareth; so that all the difference is that Matthew and Mark make it to be much longer after our Lord departed from Capernaum and went to Nazareth, than Luke does from his leaving Nazareth to go to Capernaum.

With respect to the *time of the day* when our Lord entered Capernaum, on which your Lordship makes an observation p. 82, I am ready to acknowledge, that from Luke's account only it would be most natural to conclude that Jesus met Peter and Andrew in the morning, immediately after they they had been *toiling all night*. I doubt not Luke himself thought so. But his account of this transaction is so different from that of the other evangelists, that many commentators have thought them to be quite distinct from one another, and to relate to incidents that happened at different times. I think it most probable that Luke was not so well informed of some of the circumstances of this transaction.

SECTION

SECTION XIV.

Of the harmony of the gospels according to the Antients, especially Eusebius and Epiphanius, and some of the Moderns who have most nearly followed them.

IT would, I doubt not, be a great satisfaction to your Lordship, as well as to myself, to trace the whole progress of harmonizing the gospels from the earliest times. But this, I apprehend, it will not be possible for us to do completely. It may be of some use, however, to collect a few hints to this purpose, from the works of such of the early Fathers as have bestowed the most pains upon the subject, as Eusebius and Epiphanius. As for the Harmonies of Ammonius and Tatian, it is very doubtful whether the works which go under their names be theirs, and if they be, it is generally acknowledged they are much altered and interpolated. Such as they are, I must content myself with referring our readers to Lardner's *Credibility*, part 2, vol. 5. p. 140 &c. for an account of them, having never had an opportunity of consulting them myself.

It seems to be sufficiently acknowledged, that the earliest general opinion concerning our Lord's ministry was that of its being confined to one year; but of the manner in which any person who held that opinion distributed the particular events

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of

of the gospel history we have no knowledge. However that a proper distribution of them on this plan is very easy and obvious, I hope I have sufficiently shewn in my own arrangement of them, within the same limits. That confusion and embarrassment have been the consequence of extending the ministry of Christ beyond the term abovementioned, I think I have also sufficiently shewn. And it will be no less apparent to us in the very first attempts to explain the history of Christ upon this plan, if we consider the hints that have been given by Eusebius and Epiphanius, the only writers among the Antients who appear to have given much attention to the subject.

The Harmony of Tatian, the disciple of Justin Martyr, is said by Chemnitius to have comprized the whole history of the gospel from the baptism to the suffering of Christ within one year (*Prolegomena* p. 9.) but according to Dr. Lardner, it included the space of two years.

Leaving this uncertain, the next opinion on the subject is that of Irenæus, in which I believe he always was, and ever will be, quite singular; viz. that Christ, beginning at thirty years of age, preached till he was forty or fifty. All that we know of his arrangement is, that he made the feast mentioned John v. 1, to be a passover, in which also, according to Dr. Lardner, he was not generally followed. But it seems, tho' on what authority does not appear (that it was from the reading of *πασχα* in John vi. 4, is by no means

means certain or probable) to have been afterwards generally believed, that our Lord's ministry extended to two years. We have no hints, however, given us of the arrangement of the events of the gospel history according to this plan till after the time of Eusebius, who concluded, but from no good reason that appears, that our Lord's preaching extended to three years and an half.

He says it may be collected from John's gospel; but he does not specify the passovers mentioned in that gospel; and that the passover in John vi. 4, was not one of them, is, I think, probable, for the reason alledged before.

His argument from external historical considerations is deemed by Dr. Lardner, and must be by every body, extremely weak and inconclusive. Because Luke says that Christ preached in the highpriesthoods of Annas and Caiaphas, he concluded that he must have begun in that of Annas, and have ended in that of Caiaphas; and because, according to Josephus, the highpriesthoods of Ishmael and Eleazar came between them, he, without any authority from Josephus, supposed that they all held this office an intire year. He must consequently have supposed that Christ died in the first year of the highpriesthood of Caiaphas. But according to Josephus this must have been pretty early in the government of Valerius Gratus, and considerably before the time of Pontius Pilate, evidently contrary to the gospel history.

Notwithstanding this, he reckons the years of Tiberius from the death of Augustus; so that his fifteenth year was A. D. 29. Consequently John, according to him, beginning to baptize in that year, he must have concluded that Christ suffered A. D. 33, which was probably the fifth or sixth of Pilate.

Eusebius supposes (Hist. Lib. 1 cap. 10. 11) that presently after his baptism, our Lord began to preach, and called the twelve apostles; and that presently after this event John was beheaded. And yet, notwithstanding the rapid succession of these events, he preached so privately and inoffensively, as to have done nothing that is recorded by the three first evangelists for two years and an half, all which two years he elsewhere says was before the imprisonment of John. Whereas, by the clear testimony of all the evangelists, our Lord did not chuse the twelve apostles till a considerable time after the imprisonment of John, and in the midst of the most active part of his ministry.

That an opinion so weakly and inconsistently supported should become the prevailing one, and continue so to this day, is not a little extraordinary. And indeed, notwithstanding the great reputation of Eusebius, especially as an historian, and tho' his opinion concerning the whole time of our Lord's ministry be now generally received, it was by no means the case with those who immediately followed him. For we find the opinion of the two years and half's duration of Christ's ministry in, I believe,

lieve, all that we properly call the *Fathers* who succeeded him, especially in Epiphanius.

From this writer, in his account of the Alogi, who believed that the whole of Christ's ministry was confined to little more than one entire year, we learn more distinctly what were the ideas of Christians of his age concerning the manner in which our Lord passed his time before that year, the events of which, as they all agree, are related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, viz. in preaching *without any opposition*, so that nothing is related by these three evangelists but the laborious and *contentious* part of his ministry.

His general positions are, that Christ was born on the eighth of the Ides (that is the sixth) of January, in the 42d year of Augustus (reckoning from the death of Julius Cæsar) that is, two years before the vulgar Christian æra; that he was baptized on the sixth of the ides (that is the eighth) of November, in the fifteenth of Tiberius, reckoning from the death of Augustus; making it to correspond to A. D. 28, and that he died A. D. 30, when Venutius and Cassius Longinus were consuls, having preached thro' the whole year 29, in which the Gemini were consuls. *Opera*, Vol. 6. p. 446.

Placing the baptism of Jesus a little after the feast of Tabernacles, he supposes him to have preached from that time, without any opposition, a whole year, which he weakly enough calls *the acceptable year*; and then from the feast of Tabernacles following, thro' the whole of the ensuing year, to have been violently opposed; and that in the

the passover after that complete year of opposition he suffered.

But I shall give our readers a better idea of this harmonizer, if I partly translate and partly abridge a few passages from him. He says, Vol. 1, p. 449; "After the expiration of his thirtieth year, Christ came to be baptized, and after the same thirtieth year he preached the whole acceptable year of the Lord, without any opposition, He afterwards went thro' a year of opposition from the Jews, in which he suffered much from their vexation and envy, and moreover entered upon a third year; so that in all he lived 32 years and 74 days." In this we see how little regard was paid to the fancies of Irenæus, by a writer who lived about two centuries after him, and indeed to the opinion of Eusebius, who flourished about half a century before Epiphanius. But to proceed with my extracts.

"At his baptism," he says, (Vol. 1, p. 439.) "Christ was 29 years and 10 months old. After this followed the forty days temptation, then a stay of about two weeks at Nazareth, then a day or two with John. When he had left John, we reckon two days more for the call first of Andrew and then of Peter. In another day Philip and Nathanael were called. The third day after these two last was the marriage feast at Cana, where he performed his first miracle, being then exactly thirty years old.

"The disciples above-mentioned having then left him, he was joined by others, with whom
" he

“ he went to Capernaum, afterwards to Nazareth,
“ and then again to Capernaum, where he per-
“ formed some miracles, as the cure of the wither-
“ ed hand, and of Peter’s wife’s mother. Then
“ returning again to Nazareth, he read in the
“ prophecy of Isaiah and was rejected. From
“ thence he fled for fear of Herod, and after his
“ flight remained at Nazareth. He then retired
“ to the desert, and returning from thence began
“ to preach.”

Afterwards, p. 447, he says, “ It is plain that
“ Christ preached *the acceptable year* in which no
“ person opposed him. For the first year after
“ the thirtieth of his incarnation he preached with
“ universal approbation, so that neither Jews,
“ Heathens, nor Samaritans opposed him, but all
“ heard him gladly. In this year he went up
“ to Jerusalem, after he had been baptized, and
“ passed thro’ the forty days temptation, and chose
“ his disciples. Having returned from the tempta-
“ tion to Jordan, and travelled to the sea of Tibe-
“ rias, and to Nazareth, he went up to Jerusalem,
“ and in the midst of the feast cried, saying,
“ *If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink,*
“ (John vii. 37) and then he returned to Naza-
“ reth, and Judea, and Samaria, and the country
“ about Tyre.

“ The first year being accomplished he again
“ went up to Jerusalem, and then they sought to
“ apprehend him in the feast, but were afraid.
“ At this feast he said *I do not yet go up to the feast.*
“ And they said (John vii. 25, &c.) *Is not this*
“ *he*

*" he whom they sought to apprehend, and behold he
" speaketh boldly."*

" After these things, two years and some months" (which he particularly specifies) " being elapsed
" he suffered in the month of March, in the year after the consulship of the Gemini."

What little countenance these notions, and this arrangement, have from the scriptures I need not tell your Lordship. We find no hint there of any period in our Saviour's ministry in which he was not opposed. The jealousy of the high-priests was excited at the very first passover, before any mention is made of his preaching. It was on their hearing of his making more disciples than John that he thought of retiring from Judæa into Galilee. In the feast mentioned John v. 1, we read ver. 16, that the Jews persecuted him, and sought to slay him. And this feast, whatever it was, must have been a considerable time before the feast mentioned in the viith chapter, at which he dates the opposition to Christ's ministry. Nay the passover in John vi. 4, as your Lordship supposes, must have intervened between it, and that in the viith chapter, which is expressly said to be the feast of Tabernacles.

I therefore think that, since all the antients were agreed that the *active* part of our Lord's ministry, all that part in which they say he met with any opposition, and all that is related by the three first evangelists, was confined to one year, we are sufficiently authorized by this tradition, and the plainest sense of scripture together, to reject all
that

that supposed part of our Lord's ministry which passed *without opposition*, and limit *the whole* to one year.

So little attention, we see, had Epiphanius given even to John's gospel, where only this pretended *acceptable year* is to be found; that, if I understand him at all, he makes two feasts of what John makes but one, and a long journey to come between them. And what is still more extraordinary, the incident mentioned as belonging to the first feast is subsequent to those which he mentions as belonging to the latter, as will appear by comparing the quotations in the passage recited above. His account of our Lord's visits to Nazareth, and his journeys from that place to Capernaum and back again, is exceedingly confused.

I much suspect the account he gives of the objections that the Alogi made to John's gospel. They found fault, he says, p. 444, with the gospel of John because he relates the attendance of Christ at two passovers; whereas the other evangelists only mention his attendance at one, viz. the last; tho' he adds they might have observed a third passover mentioned in John's gospel, viz. that at which he suffered. But how does Christ's attendance at two passovers affect their hypothesis, when they supposed that his ministry lasted at least a whole year; and consequently there must have been two passovers, at which he might have attended.

I cannot help expressing my surprize that Dr. Lardner should incline to the opinion of Epiphanius, and others of that age, of Christ preach-

R

ing,

ing a year without opposition. He says (*Credibility* Part 2, vol. iii, p. 137.) "In John's gospel there
 " are three passovers, and our Saviour's ministry
 " has two years and a part; but the former part
 " of his ministry there related was not so public
 " as that after John's imprisonment. In the other
 " three evangelists, who relate chiefly our Lord's
 " most public preaching, after John's imprisonment,
 " is the history of only somewhat more than
 " the space of one year. How much more is not
 " very easy to say."

Dr. Lardner, however, does not suppose the feast mentioned John v. i. to have been a passover; and he says it is a mark of the antiquity of the Harmony ascribed to Tatian, that it is there supposed to be Pentecost, he himself finding no intimation of any passover between the first mentioned by John and the last at which our Lord suffered, but that in John vi. 4. It is plain, however, that Irenæus considered the feast mentioned John v. 1, as a passover, and so I think must Epiphanius and Eusebius have done.

Of all the modern professed Harmonizers Lamy is the only one that I know who has followed the plan of those of the fathers who distributed the business of our Lord's ministry into two years; but his arrangement of the events is such, as I imagine will not give much satisfaction, since the lights that have been thrown upon the gospel history of late years, and especially in this country.

Before the passover in which our Lord had the interview with Nicodemus, he places a great part
 of

of Christ's preaching in Galilee, and even the mission of the twelve, and the upbraiding of the cities in which the chief of his mighty works were done. He also places the scene of Jesus preaching in Enon, while John was baptizing there in the August after this passover. Then comes the journey thro' Samaria, the conversation with the woman of Sychar, and the rejection at Nazareth. In the January following he places the imprisonment of John, in the month following his death, and in March after this Herod hears of Jesus, and supposes him to have been John risen from the dead.

SECTION XV.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

I. *Of the first excursion from Capernaum.*

YOUR Lordship contends, p. 77, that our Lord's first excursion from Capernaum must have required more than a week. But, except the general expression of *going about all Galilee*, &c. on which certainly no great stress can be laid, your Lordship cannot find any particulars of that excursion, that can be supposed to have required a week. All that I find are his visiting some unnamed towns, with which Galilee was very thick

sown, the sermon on the mount, and the cure of a Leper. And I must again insist upon it, that unless, in any case, so much business be distinctly *specified*, as would necessarily require more time than my hypothesis admits, supported as it is by various external and independent evidence, I cannot relinquish it. On a variety of occasions, your Lordship may think that more time than my hypothesis admits would have been *better*. But it is enough for me if it always allows *sufficient* time, tho' it may now and then be thought scanty. In general, it gives more time than is wanted.

II. *Of the time of the journey to Nain.*

TO lengthen out the time of our Lord's journeying, your Lordship appears to me to put a harsh and improbable construction on the words of Luke, in describing the journey to Nain. After mentioning the cure of the centurion's servant in Capernaum, he says, ch. vii. 11, *And it came to pass, the day after, that he went into a city called Nain.* With respect to which your Lordship says, p. 89, "It is by no means necessary to suppose that he performed this journey in one day, accompanied as he was by many of his disciples, and much people. The evangelist may mean that he undertook the journey on the next day, not that he finished it."

Now admitting that the words of the evangelist may bear this construction (though I do not think

think that they will) I should not have recourse to it without some more urgent occasion than merely to gain a single day, and a day that I can very well spare your Lordship. On a former occasion your Lordship said that "because Luke asserted a thing you believed it." I should think, therefore, that in this case, rather than depart from the obvious meaning of his words, you might suppose with me, that, on this and some other occasions, our Lord might not travel on foot. Not that a walk of twenty miles appears so formidable a thing to all persons as it may to your Lordship. And persons used to walking, as our Saviour and his apostles probably were, do not find it very fatiguing, unless unfavourable circumstances relating to the weather or the roads, &c. contribute to make it so.

III: *Of the second sabbath after the first.*

AS to the difficult phrase of *δεσπορευσης*, Luke vi. 1, which we render *the second sabbath after the first*, your Lordship knows that commentators are by no means agreed about it, and therefore there can be no apparent difficulty in my placing the transaction of plucking the ears of corn, as I do, after the passover, and consequently after the oblation of the first fruits, or while any corn may be supposed to have been standing in the fields.

Your Lordship thinks, p. 11, "with many commentators, that by this expression Luke
" means

“ means the first sabbath after the second day of “ the paschal feast.” But to this I think there are several obvious objections. Considering that the feast of Passover lasted eight days, the first sabbath after the second of those days might be the third day of the feast, and would generally fall before the expiration of it. Supposing what is most favourable to your Lordship, and against which there is just seven to one, that the sabbath preceding this should have been the very second day of the feast, this *δευτεροπρωτος*, or first sabbath after it, would be the first day after the complete expiration of the feast. And if our Lord continued at Jerusalem the whole eight days of the feast (and whenever your Lordship thinks me straitened for time you do not allow me a single day in this case) he could not have been in Galilee, the scene of this transaction, in time for it.

Besides, I cannot think that corn was in general ready to pluck and eat so soon after, or rather *in* the passover; the Jewish calendar being so adjusted, that the first corn in the country, generally, I believe, *unripe*, was presented at that time; the feast of Pentecost, which was fifty days after the passover, being called the feast of harvest. By making this sabbath the fourth after the Passover, or in the year I have pitched upon, on the first of April, I believe I have, without intending it, hit upon a day as proper for this transaction as any whatever; whereas your Lordship has been rather unfortunate in this respect.

IV. Of

IV. *Of the disciples of John.*

In considering whether John the Baptist or our Lord made more disciples, which I shall not particularly discuss, your Lordship, p. 31, omits the circumstance on which, in my own mind, I laid the greatest stress, which is that at the last passover, long after the death of John, our Lord silenced the Jewish doctors by asking them, whether the baptism of John was from heaven or of men; when it appeared that they did not venture to say openly that it was of men, because they feared the people, *all men* holding John for a prophet. Matt. xxi. 26. Mark xi. 32. Luke xx. 6.

The CONCLUSION.

I Have now urged all that occurs to me for the present on the subject of our amicable debate, and I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of hearing from your Lordship again. And having now, I thank God, recovered in a great measure, my former health and spirits, and being at length completely settled in my new situation, I shall be able, if nothing unforeseen prevent me, to give a more speedy reply to your next letter than I have done to the last, and so the controversy will sooner come to its proper termination.

Your Lordship is pleased to speak of our “differing in some conclusions of greater importance than those we are now controverting.” Of this I am fully apprized, the articles of your Lordship’s faith, as a member of the church of England, being upon record, and mine being sufficiently known by my writings, as also the stress I lay upon them, as opposed to the tenets of all the established churches in the world. Yet, my Lord, it gives me more pleasure to reflect that, notwithstanding these very considerable differences, there are still greater things in which we both agree, and on which we both, I hope, lay still greater stress; and they are things in which all persons who call themselves christians are agreed.

We

120 We both believe in a God, the intelligent author of nature, in his constant over-ruling providence, and in his righteous moral government. We both believe in the divine origin of the Jewish and Christian revelations, that Christ was a teacher sent from God, that he is our master, law-giver and judge, that God raised him from the dead, that he is now exalted at the right hand of God, that he will come again to raise all the dead, and sit in judgment upon them, and that he will then give to every one of us according to our works.

These, I need not tell your Lordship, are, properly speaking, the only *great truths of religion*, because they are those which have the greatest influence on our conduct; and to these not only the church of England, and the church of Scotland, but even the church of Rome gives it's assent. If we sufficiently attend to the importance of these great truths, and give ourselves up to the full influence of them, we shall all *love as brethren*, notwithstanding all lesser differences, and especially such as we are now discussing.

Whether our Lord preached one year or three years, three years or thirty years, we are perfectly agreed with respect to the great *object* of his preaching, and the *obligation* we are under to regulate our lives according to it; and from the catalogue of proper christian virtues, we can never exclude humility, benevolence, or candour. We must judge others as we would be judged
 S. ourselves,

ourselves, waiting for the final sentence of our great and common judge Jesus Christ.

The time is, in reality, not far distant, when both your Lordship and myself shall know, from the first authority, which of us, or whether either of us, is in the right, with respect to the subject of our present controversy; and I hope we shall both in this, and in all other respects, so conduct ourselves, as to have no reason to wish it were more distant; but that when our Lord shall return, and take an account of his servants, and of the use we have made of the talents with which we have severally been entrusted, we shall not be ashamed before him at his coming.

With the greatest respect, I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

BIRMINGHAM,

J. PRIESTLEY.

December 1, 1780.

ERRATA.

Page 9, l. 27, dele and.

36, l. 10, read, *it is plain enough (tho'.*

69, l. 13, for *before*, read *between*.

116, l. 3, for 29, read 28.

l. 6, for 33, read 32.



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